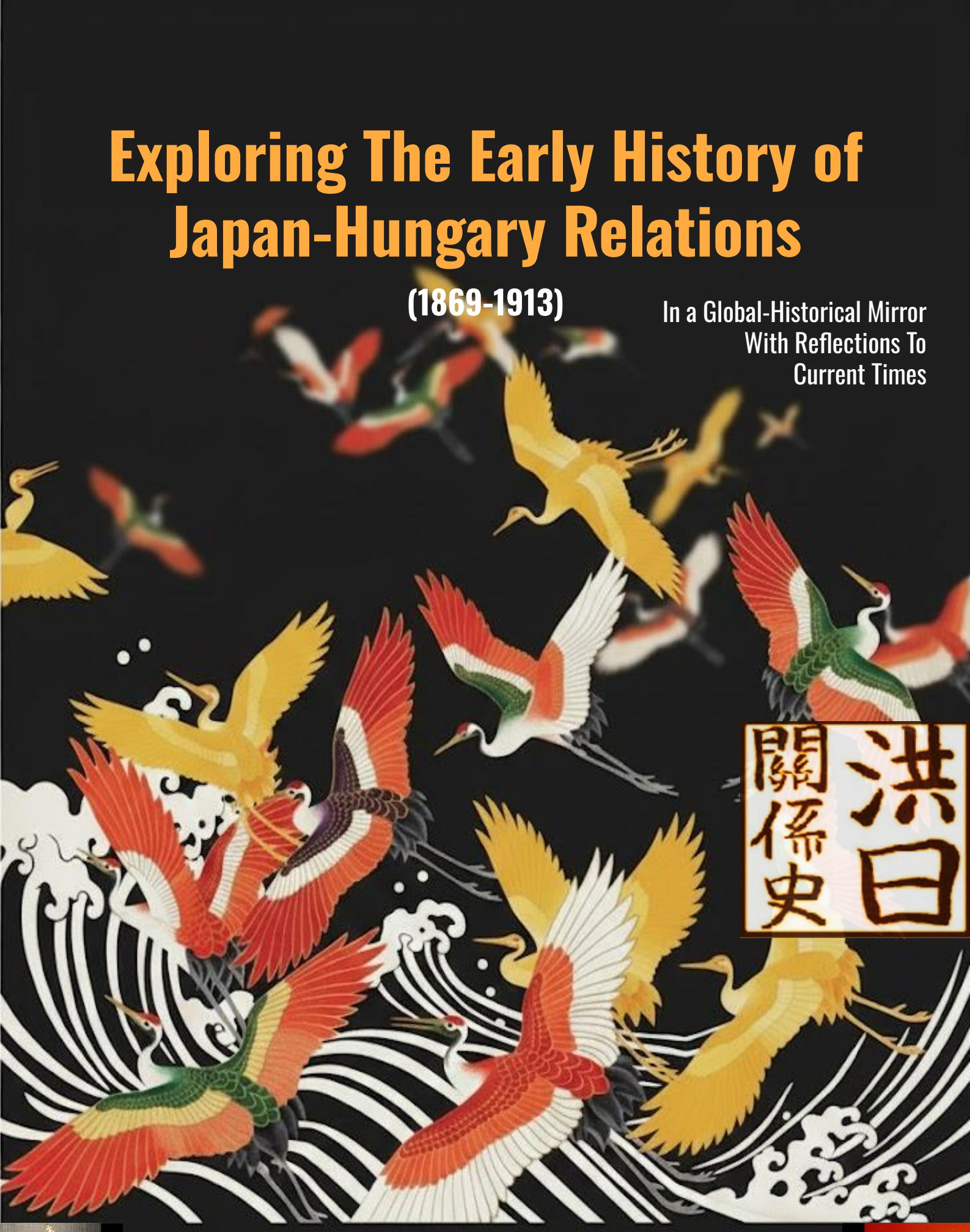
Exploring The Early History of Japan-Hungary Relations

(1869-1913)

In a Global-Historical Mirror
With Reflections To
Current Times



Gergely Tóth

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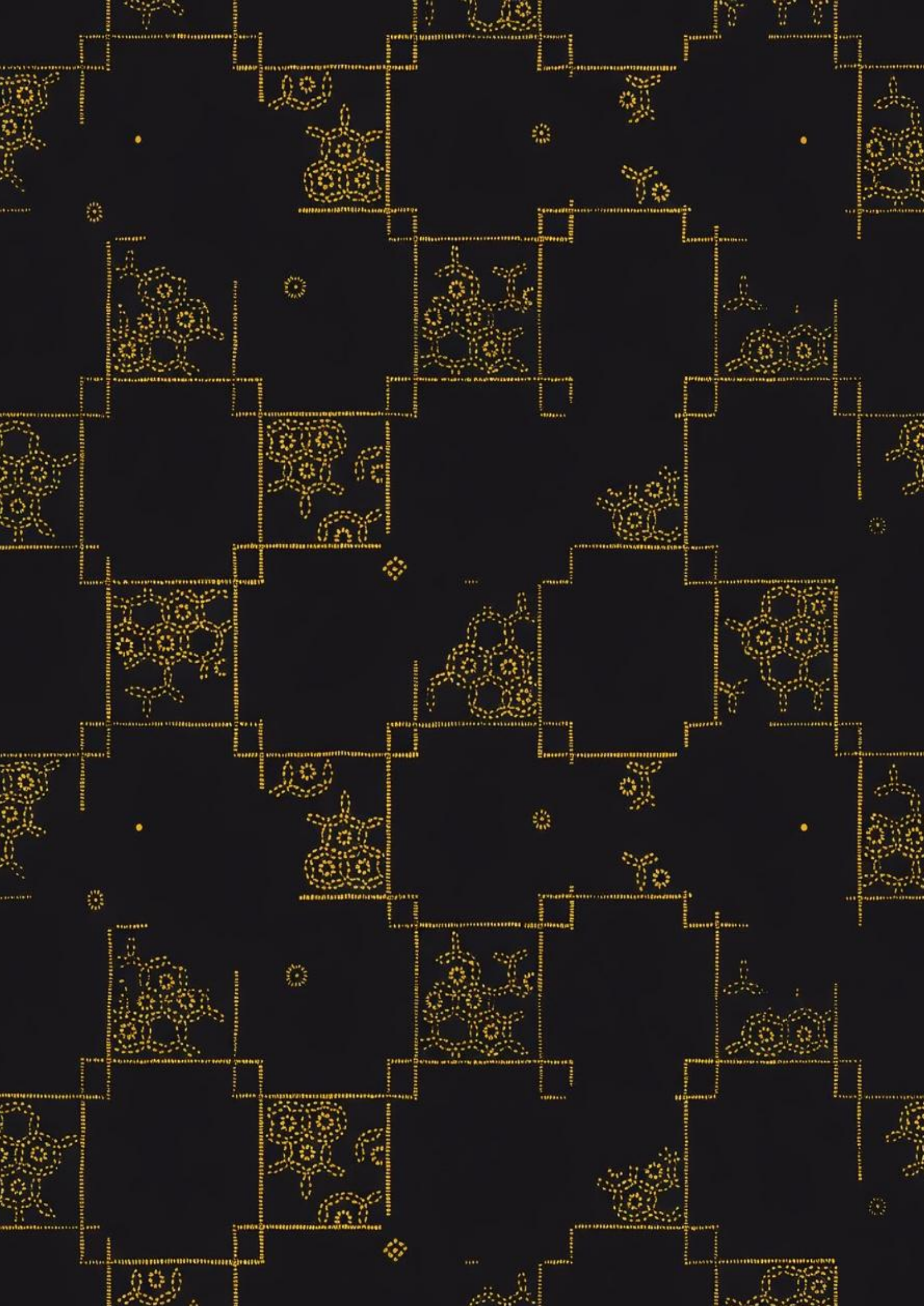

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Published on 31 July 2026.

A Note to the Engaged Reader

This monograph is unapologetically long - for reasons which the intelligent reader will not find it difficult to guess, and with which the unintelligent reader need not be troubled. Its chapters may stretch, and its footnotes form a veritable textual rainforest, thick with gluey nuance and wild, untamed sources to get lost in (in the best way possible). For those who find this an invitation, rather than an obstacle, this book offers a 360-degree landscape of its topic. It's an experience distinct from a lighter cup of tea served with mercifully short cakes – it's brewed instead for those with a pickier palate for depth. This book wasn't written with marketing profiles in mind, nor designed for quick satisfaction or shallow, immediate (pseudo-)convenience. It's for readers who regard profound inquiry not with suspicion, but with genuine interest, reading to learn, to think, and to question. Consider it an opportunity to move beyond the role of a consumer and embrace that of a curious mind, ready to sit with complexity.

So, to the brave souls still reading – those who appreciate longform thought, nuance, context, and the odd plunge into the footnoted abyss – welcome! You may just find something worth your dedicated time.

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Throughout the 20-year research period, this project received initial funding up to 2018. Between 2007 and 2009, the author was awarded the Monbusho Scholarship amounting to JPY 4,000,000. In 2009, the author also received a Local Council Award titled Lánczos Kornél – Szekfű Gyula Scholarship, amounting to HUF 300,000, in support of the publication of the book *Birodalmak asztalánál – A monarchiabeli Magyarország és Japán kapcsolattörténete 1869-től 1913-ig, korabeli és új források alapján* (Ad Librum, Budapest, 2010). In 2018, the Hungarian Ministry for Culture supported the publication of the Hungarian monograph *Japán–Magyar Kapcsolattörténet 1869–1913* (Gondolat, Budapest, 2018) with a grant of HUF 1,000,000. Other than the funding listed above, the author declares no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

The author's mother tongue is not English; therefore, AI tools were used solely for grammatical correction and language refinement. All substantive content, ideas, arguments, and interpretations remain the author's own, as do those of the cited sources' authors.

Foreword

If most 19th-century Hungarian travelogues on Japan are opium for the soul – addictive less for their subject matter and veiled racism than for their ornate, subtly humorous style – then plunging down the rabbit hole of early Japan–Hungary bilateral history is an even more potent intoxication: straight-up fentanyl microdosing. It is no wonder that my fascination began with those gateway drugs – the works of Hungarian travelers who journeyed to Japan in the late 19th century and took the time and effort to document their experiences in writing. (I should point out that I was never interested in the diluted, contaminated cheap street-market substances: travelogues filled with oohing and aahing over cherry blossoms and colorful paper lanterns, in which images of Japan and the Japanese are subjected to a kind of mental colonialism. Many Meiji-era international travelogues turned Japan into a mental postcard.) Reading these Hungarian texts hooked me for good, leaving me like a hardcore history junkie with thousands of questions about the largely unmapped story of early Japan–Hungary relations.

I believe there is a clear need for this underrated research both within and beyond academic discourse worldwide, especially from an interdisciplinary and global perspective. In recent years, there have been several books, conferences, exhibitions, research papers, and events centred on the history of bilateral relations between Japan and European countries during the 19th century, with France, United Kingdom, and Germany being at the forefront. Unfortunately, the Eastern European region remains relatively obscure in this regard. Yet, despite its historically limited research output, it is now gradually catching up – thanks to recent online archiving projects, increased international collaboration among scholars, and the growing interest of both academic and non-academic audiences. This monograph attempts to follow this trend despite its acknowledged flaws. The biggest challenge was the sheer scope of the subject, and I must admit that even after more than 20 years of research, I have only managed to scratch the surface of the history of Hungarian–Japanese relations between 1869 and 1913. I have collected and examined more than a thousand primary and secondary sources, not only to provide facts and figures, but also to interpret and highlight their interdisciplinary context and offer useful suggestions to future researchers interested in conducting investigations in this field.

The writer of this book is aware that the mere thought of comparing Japan with Hungary comes with a few issues. Some argue that comparison is nothing but Eurocentric[1] knowledge production and is thereby complicit with the epistemology of racism, imperialism, and sexism, sacrificing difference for a supposed sameness. Indeed,

[1] Eurocentrism is a dominant concept in postcolonial studies, highlighting how the Anglo-West (or Euro-America) has maintained an excessive influence over knowledge production. This has led to the creation and legitimization of universalistic theories that position the ‘rest of the world’ at the periphery, merely as providers of primary sources. Nevertheless, even within this established core – the Anglo-West, where wealth and power are concentrated – there exists its own periphery. See: Kaori Okano, Yoshio Sugimoto (ed.): *Rethinking Japanese Studies – Eurocentrism and the Asia-Pacific Region*, 2018, Routledge, p. 1.

in some cases, comparison has been used in negative ways. However, there is a counter-argument stating that comparison itself is not inherently bad, as we live in a world shaped by comparison.[2] Therefore, thinking comparatively allows us to become aware of the diverse mechanisms shaping our history and to reflect upon the perceptions (or misconceptions) of the 'Self' and the 'Other'. Some even argue that Area Studies, such as Japanology, lack objective, comparative approach – and this feature could be explained as an "*unwelcome legacy of area studies"*.[3] In light of this, the author of this book endorses Emmanuel Loserand's approach to comparativity, as outlined below.

> "*Japan is not the absolute Other of the West, but just another world among the many that inhabit our planet, without any exceptional glory nor indignity, with many similarities to other cultures, and of course, with certain singularities. There is no case to portray Japan as an inverted mirror of a vilified West. So how do we escape this discourse of absolute otherness (...)? Probably by continuing to compare, but in a more flexible, agile way, from varying the angles and using multiple levels of comparison. (...) The issue here (...) is to use multiple systematizations to make sure no single system becomes dominant, to avoid that the merry-go-round of comparisons, of 'strangeness' and/or 'familiarization' grinds to a stop. This might be the key to a proper use of comparisons in our age, a time torn between universalism and relativism, to ensure that the comparisons themselves are also objects of comparison, or, to put it another way, that they contain a meta-comparative dimension. This is an essential condition for them to stay agile, subtle, and open, to maintain 'the humor and alacrity' that constitute their real merit.*"[4]

The validity of comparative approaches is further supported by a series of studies, which argue that "*the goal of modern comparative studies concerning Japan should be to advance the understanding of how both general and specific components of cultural and literary representations of Japan and Japaneseness are manifested in the East-West cultural dialogue, and that in-depth comparative analysis is needed to reveal the interrelated aspects of the image of Japan*".[5] The early history of Japan–Hungary relations could also be interesting from a transimperial history perspective. Transimperial history examines the movement of people, objects, and ideas across imperial borders, building on transnational and new imperial history. It challenges histories confined by national boundaries, highlights cross-border processes, and decenters imperial history from former

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[2] Christopher Bush: *Why Not Compare?* English Language Notes 49.1 Spring / Summer 2011. Comparisons between Europe and Japan can also be justified by both their similarities and differences, see: François Fore, Airo Hino: *Introduction. Values in Japan and Europe: a comparative historical, socio-cultural and political perspective*. In: Value Politics in Japan and Europe, 2021. Routledge, p. 9.

[3] Sakai, Naoki. 2012. Positions and Positionalities: After Two Decades. In: Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique 20 (1) pp. 67–94.

[4] Emmanuel Lozerand: *Japan as the Absolute 'Other': Genealogy and Variations of a Topos*. Practices of Comparing: Towards a New Understanding of a Fundamental Human Practice, edited by Angelika Epple, Walter Erhart and Johannes Grave, Bielefeld: Bielefeld University Press, 2020, pp. 229-256. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783839451663-010

[5] Yevheniia Prasol: *On the Importance of Studying the Image of Japan in Culture and Literature from a Comparative Perspective.* 多文化社会研究 = Journal of global humanities and social sciences, Nagasaki University 7:2021 pp. 193-202.

colonial powers to show how empires shaped modern history.

It took many years to develop a solid skeletal framework for comprehensive research and to select and fine-tune appropriate methodologies for the meaningful interpretation of Japan-Hungary bilateral relations. Initially, I thought of an interdisciplinary research structure with a fresh, thematic and chronological dual character, rather than a classical, simply chronological description of events. Unfortunately, I was unable to find any previous examples or best practices that aligned with the concept of my project. Therefore, I had to come up with my own specially designed structure, in which I decided to use six main themes to describe the history of Japanese-Hungarian relations during the period of 1869 to 1913:

I. History of Modernization

II. History of Expeditions

III. Diplomatic and Economic History

IV. History of Travel

V. Cultural, Literary and Art History

VI. History of Ideas and Ideologies

In each thematic chapter, a chronological approach is employed; the chapters themselves are also rendered in order of their chronological importance. This monograph is intended, first and foremost, as an experiment. It was originally published in Hungarian in a preliminary form in 2018 and is now presented in English in its final form. Since the fundamental research presented in this book is supported by an exhaustive bibliography of *1,488 primary and secondary sources* in Hungarian, English, German, and Japanese (13% of the total being Japanese language sources), as well as 166 rare illustrations and 43 explanatory tables and charts, both academics and non-academics interested in the history of Japanese-Hungarian or CEE-Japanese relations can use it effectively to further their research in various directions and disciplines.

In the last decade, several bilateral anniversaries have helped to focus research on the historical ties between Japan and European countries and have become important milestones. Therefore, there is a promising possibility that new research outputs can eventually be woven into a transnational history of Japan–Europe relations. The list below is intended to summarize these anniversaries:

2013: British-Japanese Relations (400th); Portugal-Japan Relations (470th)

2014: Swiss-Japanese Relations (150th)

2015: Norway-Japan Relations (110th); Malta-Japan Relations (50th)

2016: Italian-Japanese Relations (150th); Belgium-Japan Relations (150th); Iceland-Japan Relations (60th); Liechtenstein-Japan Relations (20th);

Bosnia-Herzegovina and Japan Relations (20th); Monaco-Japan Relations (10th); Montenegro-Japan Relations (10th); San Marino - Japan Relations (20th)

2017: Danish-Japanese Relations (150th); Luxembourg-Japan Relations (90th); Ireland-Japan Relations (60th)

2018: Swedish-Japanese Relations (150th); Spanish-Japanese Relations (150th); French-Japanese Relations (160th); (in Japan, there was an important anniversary, too, since 2018 marked the 150th Anniversary of the Meiji Restoration)

2019: Polish-Japanese Relations (100th); Finnish-Japanese Relations (100th); Bulgarian-Japanese Relations (80th); Hungarian-Japanese Relations (150th); Austrian-Japanese Relations (150th); Greece-Japan Relations (120th); Kosovo-Japan Relations (10th)

2020: Czech-Japanese Relations (100th); Slovakia-Japan Relations (100th) Netherlands-Japan Relations (420th); Andorra-Japan Relations (25th)

2021: Estonia-Japan Relations (100th); Latvia-Japan Relations (100th); German-Japanese Relations (160th)

2022: Serbian-Japanese Relations (140th); Ukraine-Japan Relations (30th); Slovenia-Japan Relations (30th); Moldova-Japan Relations (30th); Lithuania-Japan Relations (30th); Cyprus-Japan Relations (60th); Albania-Japan Relations (100th); Belarus-Japan Relations (30th); Romania-Japan Relations 100th); Vatican-Japan Relations (80th)

2023: Croatia-Japan Relations (30th)

Pages of the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation concluded between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Japan (OeStA/HHStA)

It is well known that Japan was opened to foreign trade through the so-called unequal treaties – a term coined in the early 20th century – which were imposed upon it by Western powers. In 1869, diplomatic representatives of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy arrived in Japan to conclude yet another unequal treaty, the last treaty by a European Empire. Obviously, this has happened due to the support of Western powers. While the 150th anniversary of the Treaty of *Amity*, Commerce and Navigation was openly and uncritically celebrated throughout Hungary and Austria in 2019, there is a troubling twist to the story: Austria-Hungary was used by the Treaty Nations to advance their interests in Japan through the strategic application of the Most-Favoured-Nation Clause contained in the unequal treaties. In retrospect, therefore, there is little to celebrate about the manner in which this particular bilateral relationship began. Hungarians did not see any advantage in concluding a treaty with Japan at that time; however, Austria sought to emulate the great colonial empires surrounding it, and Hungary had no choice but to support this policy as the other half of the Dual Monarchy. Why were some people in 2019 celebrating the act of the conclusion of a treaty that hog-tied Meiji Japan financially and legally for 20 years, by a party that had the *least* actual interest among the Treaty Nations in trading with Japan? What were these people actually celebrating in 2019 in Hungary and in Austria? Most probably not the hog-tying of Japan; nor the inability of Hungary to let its voice be heard in the Dual Monarchy in regards to Asian foreign relations. Then what? The fluffy colonial dreams of the Dual Monarchy? Or is it something to do with the Hungarian national inferiority complex in the semi-periphery? Seeking answers to these types of questions is just one of the reasons why it is important to research the history of early Japanese-Hungarian relations. There are several other questions that this interdisciplinary research aims to answer. Firstly, it is interesting to see the difference between the actual approaches and the far-fetched ambitions of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in their seemingly mutual Asian diplomacy. The research of relations with Japan can offer answers on how to clarify this matter. While Hungarian politicians and diplomats were quite realistic in their approach to the possibilities presented by the opening of Japan in 1868, their Austrian peers had rather

unrealistic expectations. There was a distinctive Hungarian face under the collective imperial mask of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy when it came to establishing and exercising diplomatic relations with Japan. Both Hungary and Japan at that time were regarded by other Empires as "latecomers", and they needed strategies, role models and money in order to modernise their countries. Did they keep an eye on each other? If yes, how? What happened to the wave of European Japonisme in Hungary and in its surroundings? How did Orientalism appear in Hungary? Why was Austria-Hungary a strategic area for Japan in a diplomatic sense until WWI? How did Hungarians see Korea and its Japanese annexation in 1910? I attempt to answer these and other related questions, as I believe this study provides unique insights into the complexity of relations between two latecomers at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries – an otherwise neglected and underrated bilateral relationship until now. Needless to say, researching Japanese-Hungarian bilateral relations at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries requires consideration of multiple overlapping layers, each presenting its own interesting and intellectually challenging aspects. First, the Hungarian Kingdom's and the Hungarians' uneasy relation to Austria and to the whole notion of the Dual Monarchy – especially in the early decades after the Compromise in 1867. An apt and amusing literary portrayal of this relationship can be found in a work by the British fiction writer John Biggins:

> "*Now, if you wish to conceive of this, picture to yourself a worn-out old man, tormented with indigestion and rheumatism, and married to a pretty wife much younger than himself. The wife is undeniably attractive, and can be charming when the mood takes her. But for most of the time she is an insufferable, hysterical shrew: an expert practitioner of every form of marital blackmail, forever throwing tantrums, smashing china, ill treating the servants and flirting with other men. There are constant rows and threats of divorce, but in the end she usually gets her own way if for no other reason than that her husband no longer has the energy to do anything but give in.*"[6]

We also need to acknowledge that, upon arriving in Japan in 1869, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy became involved in what could best be described as a form of "*delicately crafted, and thinly veiled semi-colonialism"*,[7] orchestrated by other, far more powerful Western empires in Asia through the unequal treaty system. It is time to analyse the complicated relationship between the semi-periphery and its involvement in imperial semi-colonialism in Japan, which becomes even more significant given that the Hungarian Kingdom itself was a latecomer and a developing region at the time – much like Japan. Lately, some Hungarian researchers – like Zoltán Ginelli and László Szabolcs[8] – are trying to question the prevailing notion that the Hungarians never had colonies but were colonised, so there should be no moral responsibility to account for any kind of

[6] John Biggins: *A Sailor of Austria – In Which, Without Really Intending to, Otto Prohaska Becomes Official War Hero No. 27 of the Habsburg Empire*; McBooks Press, 2005, pp. 52.

[7] Beninio McDonough-Tranza: *The Representation of Self and Other in a Semi-Colonial Environment: An Analysis of Japan Punch, 1862–87*; In.: Victorian Review; Johns Hopkins University Press, Volume 47, Number 1, Spring 2021, pp. 45-78

[8] László, Szabolcs (2024). *Orientalist knowledge from the margins: The colonial entanglement of nineteenth-century Hungarian research on Inner Asia*. In B.C. Schär & M. Toivanen (Ed.). Integration and Collaborative Imperialism in Modern Europe: At the Margins of Empire, 1800-1950 (pp. 139–162). London: Bloomsbury Academic. Retrieved December 2, 2024, from http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350377370.ch-008

colonisation. Current apology maintains that Hungary has not benefited historically from the colonial accumulation, so the "white guilt"[9] is borne solely by the imperialist-colonial West. It looks like Hungary's embeddedness in global colonialism has long been neglected by historiography. Hungarians' semi-peripheral status allowed them to maneuver their intellectual narratives between the global colonising centre and the colonial periphery, but at the same time, sharing the comparative advantages of global colonialism.[10] We can also observe this duality in two parallel narratives concerning Asia in Hungary at the turn of the 19th–20th century: anti-colonial solidarity and sentiment on the one hand, and the engagement with, or benefit from, colonial systems of exploitation on the other. In practice, the Dual Monarchy took several concrete steps to participate in and benefit from colonial expansion. In 1891, the Austro-Hungarian government created Department III within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to investigate potential colonial territories in Africa and Asia. In 1894, the Austro-Hungarian Colonial Society was founded, following the model of the German Colonial Society, with the aim of promoting and establishing overseas colonies. Despite these initiatives, support for colonization differed between the two halves of the Dual Monarchy: in Hungary, it remained considerably weaker than in Austria. Many Hungarian politicians preferred to focus on the Carpathian Basin and believed that the country's economic resources were too limited to sustain an imperialist colonial policy. Interestingly, their opposition was primarily pragmatic rather than moral: they doubted that colonization would bring sufficient benefits and feared that it could ultimately weaken Hungary's economy.[11]

When discussing and researching Japanese–Hungarian relations, there is a clear need to employ critical approaches in Hungary for several reasons. The most important reason being that the two main relevant scholarships are inevitably harnessed into servicing certain ideologies: promoting unconditional Eurocentric, Orientalistic,

[9] White guilt refers to the feelings of shame, responsibility, or remorse that some white people experience due to systemic racism and historical injustices committed by people of the same racial group. This concept often emerges in discussions around race, particularly when white individuals recognize privileges they may have as a result of past and present racial inequalities. While some see white guilt as a constructive acknowledgment of racial issues, critics argue that it can lead to performative activism or unproductive self-blame without promoting real solutions. White guilt is used often in Critical Race Theory (CRT), which has received several criticisms. Monita Mungo (assistant professor of sociology at The University of Toledo) argues that CRT excessively focuses on race as the central issue in all social dynamics, potentially overshadowing other factors like class, gender, and individual experiences, perpetuating division by framing society primarily as a conflict between oppressors and the oppressed based on racial identities. This perspective can foster resentment and polarization rather than promoting unity or shared progress, while also leading to a reductionist view that categorizes individuals primarily by their race. She is concerned about CRT's impact on education, arguing that teaching CRT-inspired concepts can lead to the indoctrination of students. An American Enterprise Institute article, written by Marc A. Thiessen (Senior Fellow) argues that CRT is dangerous because it rejects Enlightenment ideals like reason and democracy, instead framing society as inherently structured by racial power dynamics. It suggests that CRT portrays all white people as oppressors and advocates racial discrimination as a remedy. Another article, written by Fabio Rojas discusses the strengths and weaknesses of CRT. It acknowledges CRT's accurate identification of systemic racial issues, such as disparities in criminal justice and hiring. However, it critiques CRT's proposed solutions, arguing that rejecting liberal institutions like free speech, private property, and incremental progress is misguided. See:
https://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/555351-the-real-problem-with-critical-race-theory/;
https://www.aei.org/op-eds/the-danger-of-critical-race-theory/;
https://www.discoursemagazine.com/p/what-critical-race-theory-gets-right-and-wrong (accessed: 2024 Aug)

[10] Ginelli Zoltán: *Félperiférias gyarmatiság: Magyar rasszpozíciók a globális kolonializmusban*. Kritikai Földrajz Blog, 2020.07.14.
https://kritikaifoldrajz.hu/2020/07/14/felperiferias-gyarmatisag-magyar-rasszpoziciok-a-globalis-kolonializmusban/ (accessed: 2022 Jan); See also: Mathieu Gotteland: *Austro-Hungarian Informal Imperialism in China, 1869–1917* Journal of Austrian Studies, Volume 56, Number 2, Summer 2023, pp. 31-40. https://doi.org/10.1353/oas.2023.0022

[11] Hopka Zoltán: *Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia gyarmatosító törekvései.* In: Világtörténet, 2025/1., pp. 27-29.

Japanophile propaganda[12] on one side (Japanology), and servicing state-led, exaggerated ideas of a "glorious nation" on the other (state-endorsed Hungarian history).[13] Especially within Hungarian Japanology, postmodern critical approaches, which seek to deconstruct and demystify established theories and methodologies, remain significantly underrepresented to date.[14] Sadly enough, even when such approaches are present, they are rarely applied with a thorough understanding of the critical frameworks underpinning them. Thus it looks like some researchers are keen to jump on the bandwagon of new interpretational trends, being quick at picking up trendy buzzwords, but, by the end of the day, it is more than apparent that they are unable to apply it correctly and consciously on their very own outputs.[15]

My modus operandi when it comes to applying criticism can be described in three

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[12] Throughout the 1990s, the Japanese government made significant investments in promoting academic endeavors, aligning with its broader commitment to enhancing Japan's soft power. Such governmental support steered Japanese Area Studies (Japanology and Japan/Japanese Studies) towards producing atheoretical narratives, and partially succeeded in transforming the field into a "*propaganda arm of the Japanese state*". See: H.D. Harootunian and Masao Miyoshi, 'Introduction: The "Afterlife" of Area Studies'. In: *Learning Places: The Afterlife of Area Studies*, ed. Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002., pp. 1–18.

[13] For a through analysis on the latter, see: Tomasz Kamusella: *The Fallacy Of National Studies – Identities In-Between in East Central Europe*, Routledge, 2019; Further reading on how state-led political propaganda is overpowering academic scientific research through the numerous "historical research institutions" or "historical think-tanks" in the last decade in Hungary, due to the fact that these newly established institutions are under the explicit and direct ideological guardianship of the state: Gyáni Gábor: *Shift of regime change and what followed after that* In: Magyar Tudomány 183 (2022) 8, pp. 1088-1093. Further readings about the lack of academic autonomy in Hungary: Ádám Havas and Ágoston Fáber: *The Rise of Heteronomous Academia on the EU's Borderlands* Lefteast, 2019. August; Szilvia Horváth: *Illiberal Cultural War and Hegemony-Building in Hungarian Academia: Scholars between Cooperation and Resistance* Illiberalism.org November 17, 2022 https://www.illiberalism.org/illiberal-cultural-war-and-hegemony-building-in-hungarian-academia-scholars-between-cooperation-and-resistance/ (accessed: Aug 2023); Andrea Pető: *Current Comment: The Illiberal Academic Authority. An Oxymoron?* History of Science and Humanities Volume44, Issue4 December 2021, pp. 461-469; Körtvélyesi Zsolt: *Az akadémiai szabadság mint a magyar (jog)tudomány közege*. FUNDAMENTUM / 2021. 2 -3. szám, pp. 5-27.; Gergely Kováts, Zoltán Rónay. "Academic Freedom in Hungary." Central European University OSUN Global Observatory on Academic Freedom, 2021. https://unipub.lib.uni-corvinus.hu/7220/1/KovatsG_GOAF_Academic_Freedom_in_Hungary_20220218_FINAL.pdf. In view of the above, it is not surprising that the academic freedom index in Hungary is at a historical low since 1991, resembling the levels of the 1950s. In 2023, Hungary ranked in the bottom 20-30 percent in terms of academic freedom, positioned between Thailand and Uzbekistan. See: https://academic-freedom-index.net/research/Academic_Freedom_Index_Update_2024.pdf (accessed 2024 July)

[14] Outside Hungary, a substantial body of critical interdisciplinary scholarship has emerged, examining and theorizing contemporary Japanese phenomena through the interconnected lenses of critical media studies, literary studies, musicology, history, and even fan studies. These new approaches are trying to "*inject a dose of reality into the historical analysis of romantic fantasies of Japan, while also exploring the contested nature of fantasy as both a deconstructive force and a conservative structuring logic*". Thomas Baudinette: *Pure Invention or Pure Fantasy? A Critical Review of a Popular History of Transnational Japanese Media Fandom*. Journal of the Society for Asian Humanities 2022. p. 360. https://doi.org/10.3316/informit.943064906261933

[15] A project from 2018-19 ('Japonisme in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy' – led by the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, Budapest, with the Academy of Performing Arts, Prague, and with the Polish Institute for World Art Studies, Warsaw) paints a rather telling, or, I would go so far as to say, pretty grotesque picture of this phenomenon. At the end of this project, a supposedly transnational, decolonizing study output of *Japonisme* was framed with the story and the translation of an unequal treaty between Japan and Austria-Hungary signed in 1869 – without any critical explanation. They also dated their publication on the exact day of the *151*st (?) anniversary of the treaty, to "*celebrate the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and the countries which used to belong to Austria-Hungary*", failing to notice that at the same time, they are awkwardly *celebrating* the last unequal treaty that hog-tied Japan for about 20 years. Hence, there is a huge and hardly explainable discrepancy in between the intended *trendiness* of the research, and the rather *subconscious*, *self contradictory* presentation/delivery.

stages. First, it is catalyzed by a problem, involving both emotional and intellectual engagement. This means feeling or recognizing a mismatch between surface appearances, discourses, and narratives,[16] and the underlying realities, causes, or motivations. These can include assumptions, presuppositions, or certain norms that spark the need for deeper investigation. Secondly, it is important to be as objective as possible and to approach the problem through an interdisciplinary lens. This involves conducting a thorough, unbiased analysis of the problem at both the micro (personal, individual) and macro (global, regional) levels, incorporating insights from various disciplines to achieve a holistic understanding. This process can be further described as the '*Hermeneutics of suspicion*' (as coined by Ricoeur): the act of attempting to decode meanings that are disguised.[17] In my case, criticism focuses on the critique of discourses and narratives. The third element I find important is to provide systematic, structured reasoning by offering a well-founded, logical, inductive argument that addresses the problem ethically and comprehensively. The goal is to seek out and examine the multitude of practices – the "*processes, procedures and apparatuses – involved in the production of 'truth', rather than (simply) to uncover what is concealed*".[18] This inquiry is pursued without resorting to dehumanization or unethical tactics, yet with an openly admitted enjoyment in applying due irony and sarcasm when expected standards fall short. As Lorenzini and Tazzioli argue: "*Critique should not limit itself to negative, debunking or deconstructive tasks. Indeed, if, on the one hand, unpacking, undoing and problematising are the verbs of what we define here as the 'operations of critique', on the other hand, critique, as a practice, should also consist in enacting and opening up. In other words, critique should also be able to build and produce.*"[19]

It cannot go unnoticed that over-deconstructing things around us can easily lead to a point where almost everything loses meaning, and we just end up with throwing the baby out with the bathwater – so one should be cautious too, when applying a critical approach, because being overwhelmed with it could easily leave everyone confused,

[16] Narrative is a specific type of discourse that organizes events in a sequential and meaningful way, offering insights into the world and human experiences. While discourse broadly encompasses all discussions on a topic in various forms, narrative is distinct in that it presents stories with a chronological structure. It typically concludes with an evaluation that provides lessons and guidance for future actions or policies. Narratives create meaning by addressing key elements such as what is happening, how, where, when, why, and who is involved. This meaning is shaped through inclusion and exclusion, word choices in describing settings, events, and characters, as well as relational distinctions that define identities. Techniques like labeling, verb forms, adjectives, and other linguistic strategies contribute to this process. Linus Hagström & Karl Gustafsson (2019): *Narrative power: how storytelling shapes East Asian international politics*, Cambridge Review of International Affairs, pp. 4-5. DOI: 10.1080/09557571.2019.1623498

[17] Ricoeur, P. 1970. *Freud and Philosophy: An essay on interpretation*. (First published in 1965). Yale University Press; Ricoeur, P. 1974. *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*. (First published in 1969.) Northwestern University Press.

[18] Tamboukou, M. 1999. *Writing genealogies: An exploration of Foucault's strategies for doing research*. In: Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education, 20 (2), 201–217

[19] Lorenzini, D. and Tazzioli, M. 2020. *Critique without Ontology: Genealogy, collective subjects and the deadlocks of evidence*. In: Radical Philosophy, 2.07, Spring. p. 29.

and any kind of clear logic would hardly be applicable any more.[20] There are certain issues with social constructivism, postmodern deconstructivism in Academia – particularly, in their extreme forms, such as ideological activism by social justice warriors, and deconstructive postmodernist leftists in academic disciplines[21] – so being cautious with their application is advisable.[22] In the social constructivist framework, things possess specific characteristics because 'we' originally constructed them that way. This enables fluid perceptions of reality – rather than accepting it as fixed, 'we' can liberate ourselves from it and reshape it through continuous deconstruction and reconstruction. The appeal of social constructionism lies partly in the notion that we can reshape the world by reconstructing 'so-called' facts in new ways that overcome the flaws of previous constructions. In this view, facts are not as brute as they seem to us.[23] When 'old concepts' are deconstructed (sometimes only for the sake of deconstruction) until they lose their meaning,[24] or deconstructed to their inverse, what happens is an endless cycle of inherently self-contradictory, inversely exclusionary, but sometimes very popular meta-criticisms. This can lead to a loss of one's ability to effectively address matters, as one becomes fearful of being criticised for appearing one-sided, discriminative, ignorant, or paternalistic, among other concerns. Inevitably, the deeper postmodern deconstruction drills into the bottomless abyss, the more difficult it becomes to communicate ideas without getting lost in uncontrollable explosions of subatomic fragmentation. This process is overly obsessive by nature. As a result, it leads to intellectual paralysis – where, instead of clarifying or advancing knowledge, one finds themselves completely lost in endless layers of deconstruction without reaching any solid ground. Douglas Murray, a British author and conservative political commentator, cultural critic, and journalist refers to the period from the 1960s to the present in the West as the "*era of deconstruction*", or an "*era of taking things apart as a game*". Murray points out that deconstruction started as an "*academic game that spilled into the wider culture*". He argues that while deconstructing things is relatively easy, there is a significant risk that those things cannot be put back together. Murray views this as a fundamentally destructive activity.[25]

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[20] There is an excellent research note that discusses the logical pitfalls of something that could be best described as some kind of a 'postmodern deconstructional activism in Japanese Studies', and how easily it can miss its mark and turn every imaginable logic inside out. Julie Valk: *The "Kimono Wednesday" Protests – Identity Politics and How the Kimono Became More Than Japanese*. In: Asian Ethnology Volume 74, Number 2 • 2015, 379–399, Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture

[21] Porter, Allen: *Social Justice Leftism as Deconstructive Postmodernism*. Rice University, 2021.; Noah Rothman: *Unjust – Social Justice and the Unmaking of America*, Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 2019; Some even argue that when activism permeates the humanities' 'XY Studies' programs, it signals the death of that discipline. See: Douglas Murray: Racism, Marxism, and the War on the West | Lex Fridman Podcast https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EG7I6Bt_NZY (accessed: 2024 Aug.)

[22] David J. Nightingale and John Cromby (Eds.) (1999). *Social Constructionist Psychology – A Critical Analysis of Theory and Practice*. Open University Press

[23] Aktok, Özgür: *On the Inevitable Failure of Social Constructionism: The Transcendental Self-Contradiction of an Empty Concept.* Kaygı. Bursa Uludağ Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Felsefe Dergisi, Mar. 2022, doi:10.20981/kaygi.1076106. p. 234-235.

[24] Postmodern deconstructivism diminishes the fixed meaning of words and ideas while overemphasizing context. Similarly, social constructionism is often criticized for its anti-realist and relativist implications.

[25] Douglas Murray: *Racism, Marxism, and the War on the West* | Lex Fridman Podcast https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EG7I6Bt_NZY (accessed: 2024 Aug.)

Speaking of clear logic, there are certain topics that truly deserve to be deconstructed and demystified. For instance, one rather famous subcultural belief (more precisely: a sub-scientific alternative notion) in the history of Japanese-Hungarian bilateral relations is the notion of kinship between Hungarians and Japanese. Figuratively speaking, in this book we will explore a unique and colorful flower within the vast field of alternative beliefs: the concept of Hungarian–Japanese kinship. This flower is native only to Hungary and Japan, and has been blooming in certain (hazy and cloudy) ideological terrains for about 150 years. In its quest for survival, it has even evolved to produce a psychogenic compound that affects the humans who ingest them. It is hallucinogenic and has historically been used by Hungarian and Japanese politicians, diplomats and alternative thinkers to achieve altered states of consciousness. Petals of this flower feature an active ingredient, which activates specific ideological receptors: the effects are intense, and include altered perceptions of self, and warm feelings of attachment to a specific other nation. It is important to understand the spiritual effects of this tiny little flower, and the reason for usage among advocates. I deliberately used a figurative language, since these notions of Hungaro-Japanese kinship are so colorful and so psychedelic, that they go well beyond common sense and clear logic. Since I am an avid collector of these types of statements that can be observed in the Hungarian common talk, I am able to present to you my precious collection of the beliefs, and the believer's interpretation of this alleged relatedness between Japanese and Hungarians, while showing you the historiographical and political background behind the spread of the notion.

Mi volt a véleménye Japánnak még csak fiz év előtt, Oroszországról?
Világot leftalu, falánk szörnyetegnek tartotta.
Fekete Octopus (nyolckarunak), amely mindent magához rapad és elpusztít!
Wie dachte Japan noch vor zehn Jahren über Russland?
Es hielt Russland für ein gieriges Ungetüm.
Für einen schwarzen Achtarmer (Octopus), der alles an sich reisst und vernichtet!
RUSSIA
SIBERIA
CHINA
TURKEY
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
PACIFIC OCEAN

A humorous diplomatic atlas of Asia and Europe (europeana)

Obviously, spreading an alternative notion of relatedness between Hungarians and Japanese is not useful or meaningful. In fact, it may do more harm than good. Nevertheless, Austria, for instance, provided shining examples of good practice for fostering real understanding and re-evaluating the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of bilateral connections between Japan and the present countries that were part of the former Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy. One such example is an exhibition held in Vienna, in November 2020. The title of the exhibition was "*Everything you've ever wanted is on the other side of the Planet*", and its starting point was the unequal treaty signed between Japan and the Dual Monarchy in 1869. Let's have a look at the curator's own introduction words to the exhibition:

> *"Last year, Japan and Austria celebrated the 150th anniversary of their diplomatic relations and long-standing exchanges. The beginning of this partnership was marked by the 1869 Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation. Despite this friendly celebration, this treaty perfected the unequal conditions that already existed between Japan and other Western countries due to the most-favoured-nation treatment. After this treaty, unfair articles, such as extraterritorial rights, were applied by Austria and other countries. (...) When we encounter a totally different culture, our reaction would be polarized. Some dislike it and try to ignore it, while others get curious and try to know more. Among these, some become obsessed, even manic in their appreciation of other cultures. It is generally these people who encourage mutual understanding between different countries. On the other hand, as this unfair treaty represents, desire and craving for Others and their prosperity often result in exploitation and vandalism. Some of the works of art in this exhibition can be understood as representations of how artists respond to power imbalances in international relationships under post-colonial and neo-colonial conditions and drastically different social and class backgrounds. Following this commemorative year, the aim of the exhibition (...) is to provide some illustrations of the contradictory feelings towards foreignness, political identity and post-colonial or post-war issues from the late 19th century to today. This project also deals with how artists interpret desire, passion and love for foreign cultures, artefacts and lands. Indeed, both are polarised emotions and reactions towards other cultures."*[26]

Regrettably, the exhibition did not receive the attention it deserved from the public and media in Austria due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. To the best of the writer's knowledge, there were no comparable events or critical discussions on the Hungarian side during or after the anniversary year. As a result, the jubilee in Hungary ended on a lacklustre note, presenting little to no intellectual challenge to the public or academics. Returning to Vienna, we may recall another Japan-related exhibition held there in 2019, the year of the 150th anniversary, entitled "*Japan Unlimited*". The exhibition attracted considerable media attention and public interest, with approximately 13,000 visitors attending. Due to the fact that the participating artists touched on certain taboos in Japanese society, it created heated debates in Japan in forms of Japanese right wing Twitter posts and viral re-posts that demanded the immediate revocation of the official accreditation given by the Japanese Embassy in Vienna earlier in 2019. Later on, politicians jumped on this wave, and under this political pressure, the Japanese Embassy eventually gave in, and decided to withdraw its accreditation, stating that the exhibition

[26] http://www.miaca.org/english/#ex36 (accessed: 2023 March)

"*did not serve the purpose of deepening mutual understanding and promoting friendly relations*". When in fact, nothing served the understanding of Japan better and deeper in the Anniversary year, than the critical views represented in the exhibition. The exhibition venue's response was righteously very assertive and straightforward, stating that the Vienna "*MuseumsQuartier is a centre of cosmopolitanism, artistic freedom, and freedom of expression. Japan Unlimited, like all other art and cultural projects taking place in the MuseumsQuartier, must be regarded and respected from this perspective.*"[27]

There are smaller-scale yet highly interesting projects that have true value and potential, which Central and Eastern European countries can utilize to commemorate their relations with Japan in a meaningful and fashionable manner.[28] In this section, I will introduce four grassroots projects that I find particularly compelling. The first idea comes from Japan, from the city of Matsue, where a 100 years old, Czech-made *Koch&Korselt* piano was discovered in an old building which was closed to the public for quite a long time. At the time of the discovery in 2014, the piano was in a bad shape. Locals have renovated it with the help of the Czech Embassy and Czech experts. Since 2016, the beautifully renovated old Czech piano of *Koch&Korselt* has been living its second life during the occasional open concerts.[29] There is another ongoing Japanese project that aims to hold panel exhibitions in and outside of Japan about the Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war, who were stationed at Aonogahara camp.[30] The SMS Kaiserin Elisabeth was in the area of Tsingtau in 1914, when the first world war broke out. Japan entered the war as an ally of Great Britain. The Austro-Hungarian PoWs were in Aonogahara camp in Japan between 1914-1920. The series of exhibitions are presenting the PoWs' camp life: works by prisoners of war, parts of camp buildings, as well as memorabilia and photographs. The Aonogahara Project, in collaboration with the Museum of Lower Austria has made a small contribution to the 150th anniversary year of Austrian-Japanese relations in 2019 by holding an exhibition.[31] There is another project from Austria, Castle Loosdorf in Fallbach. The castle is home to a broken porcelain collection consisting of

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[27] https://www.derstandard.at/story/2000110847491/kritische-kunst-ueber-japan-japanik-um-wiener-ausstellung https://news.artnet.com/art-world/japanese-embassy-objects-vienna-show-1697463 (accessed: 2023 March)

[28] As for an example outside of Europe, there was an interesting workshop organised by the Department of Southeast Asian Studies, National University of Singapore in 2021, with the title "*Escaping Kakania*". https://fass.nus.edu.sg/sea/events/escaping-kakania-eastern-european-travels-in-colonial-southeast-asia/ (accessed: 2023 May) Kakania, Robert Musil's name for the Austro-Hungarian Empire, comes from the designation kaiserlich (und) königlich, "Imperial (and) Royal", in the imperial language commonly abbreviated to k. k. [pronounced kah-kah]. "Kaka" is also the children's word for "pooping" (in German, Czech, Croatian, etc.). The theoretical framework of the workshop revolved around this ambiguity by investigating the experiences of travellers who originated from the Double Monarchy and journeyed to Asia: the Imperial and Royal / Poo-poo-land refers to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, but it is also viewed as an attitude, like a childish giggle, to any empire, establishment, identity, mentality, theoretical framework. According to the organizers, 'Escaping Kakania' can be understood in all its poetic and ironic (im)possibilities and contradictions, forgetting neither the creative and emancipatory desires and unexpected encounters, revelations and transformations that may be part of escaping, nor the ways travellers carry Kakania – along with other dreams and nightmares of self and homeland. As the further explanation for the workshop goes: "*Eastern European identities and self-determination were dreamed, negotiated, struggled for in the margins, or under the rule, of great empires, West and East, which aimed to divide the region among themselves, rather like Western European empires did in Southeast Asia. We focus on people from nations that -- rather like most of Southeast Asia -- did not have colonies, were at times (semi-)colonized, and were orientalised in Western perspectives. Yet, to see them as merely "marginal" would be to adopt imperial perspectives. They were Europeans who shared much with colonized people in Asia, but who, especially during their travels or stay in Asia, were/became White and in various ways dependent on the colonial powers.*"

[29] http://lovelynovy.com/ (accessed: 2023 March)

[30] https://aonogaharaproject.org/ (accessed: 2023 March)

[31] https://www.museumnoe.at/de/haus-der-geschichte/Sonderausstellung/aonogahara (accessed: 2023 March.)

more than 10,000 shards of old Imari (Ko-Imari) porcelains. In WWII, the porcelains were partially destroyed, but from 2018, some Japanese experts are trying to make these pieces sparkle again.[32] Their aim is to conduct academic research on the shards, and to restore some of them back to their original beauty, and to compile a story from the background, history and fate of those pieces. The fourth and the last one to be introduced here, is a project from Poland. The project aims to shed more light on the life story of Bronisław Piłsudski (Józef Piłsudski's older brother) who was a Polish self-made anthropologist and ethnographer, who became famous for his research on the Ainu people in Sakhalin at the beginning of the 1900s. The most interesting part of this project is that it is led by Bronisław Piłsudski's great-granddaughter herself, Danuta Onyszkiewicz, who had set out on a journey to follow Bronisław's footsteps, and even travelled to Japan in 2019 on a ship like her great-great-uncle did in order to discover new facts about his life, and to meet the descendants of her own distant family in Japan (since Bronisław had an Ainu wife and children). [33] I strongly believe that these collaborative bilateral cultural projects with significant historical values deserve bigger publicity, and more financial support, in order to reach their potential to trigger meaningful discourses about mutual understanding. Probably, sooner or later, Hungary will find its own project that fits into the line-up of the examples above, that are already helping to nurture civil and academic ties between Japan and the (Central) Eastern European region. I have written this book partly in response to the lack of such meaningful projects, and in order to address the intellectual gap that persists in Hungary years after the 150th bilateral anniversary. By publishing this book, my aim is to (as much as possible) objectivize, reduce narrative bias in,[34] and demystify Japanese-Hungarian relations, and to be critical where critical thinking is called for. It is easy to see that being overly biased toward Japan or Hungary could distort any message and the presentation of comparisons. I believe that one should never use one's research activities, outputs, and media/academic visibility to support or promote skewed views, or to use it for political/ideological activism or propaganda. Such an attitude is utterly unethical, fails to contribute to our understanding, and contradicts the core values and principles of academic research. This behaviour aligns with other detrimental research practices such as cherry-picking and other forms of scientific misconduct.[35] Although having an academic background in Japanese Studies (M.A.), I try not to be personally biased towards Japan or Hungary (on either end of the bias spectrum). I tried my best to avoid bias traps, by being conscious about them. By applying this approach, I try to offer a more ethical and valid overview of the early

[32] https://roip.jp/ (accessed: 2023 March)

[33] "Project Bronek", or Project "Śladami Bronka" https://sladamibronka.wordpress.com/; https://www.facebook.com/bronek.pilsudski/ ; A long interview from 2022 with Danuta about her project can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MO4hMQ-1-9k (accessed: 2023 March)

[34] I find the viewpoint that emphasizes the need to create narratives in historiographical works problematic. The issue with narrative lies in its tendency to impose a homogeneous line of interpretation that suggests direction and evokes emotional attachment or disengagement. In my opinion, it is far more valuable to examine facts, figures, individuals, and actions from multiple perspectives, and to present them in a logical, critical, and objective manner. Rather than cherry-picking elements that fit into a linear storyline designed to appeal to a perceived audience, historiography should strive for analytical depth and complexity.

[35] An international academic scandal involving Japan occurred when J. Mark Ramseyer, a corporate-law specialist in Japanese Legal Studies and a Harvard professor, denied that the comfort-women system forced Korean women into prostitution, calling it "pure fiction". His academic misconduct was characterized as a severe breach of academic standards. See: Jeannie Suk Gersen: *Seeking the True Story of the Comfort Women – How a Harvard professor's dubious scholarship reignited a history of mistrust between South Korea and Japan.* The New Yorker, 02/25/2021 https://www.newyorker.com/culture/annals-of-inquiry/seeking-the-true-story-of-the-comfort-women-j-mark-ramseyer; Tessa Morris-Suzuki: *The Comfort Women Issue, Freedom of Speech, and Academic Integrity – A Study Aid* https://chwe.net/irle/morris_suzuki_studyaid.pdf (accessed: 2024 August)

Japanese-Hungarian relations throughout the whole book – not by just chasing the illusion of dialectical objectivity, but by trying to apply correct disciplinary, procedural objectivity.[36] As an independent researcher, I define independence as being free from political, economic and institutional influences that may compromise scientific or personal integrity. I am therefore less affected by the integrity crisis prevalent in contemporary scientific fields, including the humanities and Japan-related studies.[37] Moreover, I do not have to produce scientifically-based claims that benefit specific ideological or political interests and I have the freedom to be self-reflective. I strive to minimise the influence of external factors that might sway my decisions, and I am actively working to become less susceptible to such influences.[38] At the same time (hopefully already evident in this foreword), it is important to me to explore, appreciate, and delve into the implicit ambiguity, humour, irony, and meta-meanings that underlie pure facts and figures. This approach is not only a form of personal entertainment and a way to lighten the inherent dryness of purely methodological historiographical work, but it also serves as a necessary companion during the many struggles of writing this monograph. Whatever frustrations or challenges arose, I tried to transform them into humour, and sometimes thorny sarcasm, as a behind-the-scenes glimpse into the often bitter, yet oddly enjoyable, process of scholarly research.

As a Japanese Studies researcher myself, I do not want to ignore (in fact, I duly welcome) the constant critical voices which are being articulated about the modern status and perception of Japan/Japanese Studies. This is happening in the midst of a persistent debate over area studies,[39] and with it comes the questioning of the credibility of sole researchers in their 'disciplinary credibility suit' of their academic status. Some scholars are stating that the field of area studies desperately needs deep, interdisciplinary, complex group research to be done.[40] Others hold the view that area studies were already reformed following fierce battles within academic circles, and that continued debate on the matter is merely flogging a dead horse. Yet, while area studies scholars since the late 2010s have sought to reshape the field into 'comparative area studies' by introducing and advocating for rigorous methodologies and substantive intellectual content, the contentious 'area studies wars' of the 1990s – between disciplinary fields and area studies – are still being fought, particularly on the peripheries of Europe. It is indisputable that some publications in this field continue to lack robust methodological and procedural

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[36] Allan Megill: *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error. A Contemporary Guide to Practice*. Univ. of Chicago, 2007; Guy Axtell: *The 'Dialectics of Objectivity'?* In.: Social Epistemology Review and Reply Collective, 2014, Vol. 3, No. 7, 5-7. http://wp.me/P1Bfg0-Y9

[37] P. Huijnen and P. Huistra: *On the Use of Replications in History*. white paper (Utrecht 2022). pp. 2-3. In their paper, authors assert that "*scientific methodological self-examination has left the humanities, in which replicability as a principle of scholarly soundness is highly uncommon, largely untouched*". See also: Isaac Stone Fish: *The Other Political Correctness – Why are America's elite universities censoring themselves on China?* / September 4, 2018, New Republic https://newrepublic.com/article/150476/american-elite-universities-selfcensorship-china (accessed: 2024 June)

[38] Gläser, J., Ash, M., Buenstorf, G. et al. *The Independence of Research – A Review of Disciplinary Perspectives and Outline of Interdisciplinary Prospects*. Minerva 60, 105–138 (2022). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11024-021-09451-8

[39] For further assessment, see: Busse-Valbjorn-Doolotkeldieva-Ortmann-Smith-Shami-Costa-Weipert-Fenner-Wolff: *Contextualizing the Contextualizers: How the Area Studies Controversy is Different in Different Places*; International Studies Review (2024) https://www.academia.edu/115908423/Contextualizing_the_Contextualizers_How_the_Area_Studies_Controversy_is_Different_in_Different_Places (accessed: 2024 Aug); Saskia Schäfer: *Breeding Roses and Chasing Unicorns: Reflections from Europe on the Changing Field of Southeast Asian Area Studies*; In: IQAS Vol. 51 / 2020 3–4, https://doi.org/10.11588/iqas.2020.3-4.13613

[40] Hans Kuijper: *Comprehending the Complexity of Countries*, Springer Verlag, Singapore, 2021.

foundations. As a result, scholars within the field may still perceive criticism in academia – on one hand, as a double standard that requires them to constantly justify their relevance and legitimacy; on the other, as a valid and ongoing questioning of the foundations of area studies itself – an issue that, at times, remains the elephant in the room.[41] At this point, it might be worth examining some claims against area studies, including Japanology and/or Japan/Japanese Studies. (Some prefer to distinguish between "Japan Studies" and "Japanese Studies", believing that the latter, in addition to focusing on Japanese culture, primarily refers to the teaching and learning of the Japanese language.)[42] The primary concern surrounding area studies is the perceived lack of a structured explanatory framework and its resultant impact on scientific legitimacy.[43] While I personally find some criticisms valid, others reflect an elitist or paternalistic stance from traditional scientific disciplines. Emphasizing interdisciplinary collaboration, transparency, and the development of rigorous theoretical and ethical frameworks can address many of these concerns, fostering a more inclusive and dynamic academic environment. Nonetheless, a fundamental problem often overlooked by critics affects not only area studies but all humanities disciplines. Internet-based communication has fundamentally transformed the landscape of knowledge and discourse, leading to what can be described as the 'democratization' of the humanities. In the digital era, everyone can find a platform to voice their opinions, regardless of expertise, which has diminished the role of trained scholars and experts in shaping conversations within the field. For the general public, this democratization of knowledge has made it increasingly difficult to distinguish between informed, research-based perspectives and those driven by personal bias or ideological agendas. Simultaneously, in a postmodern world characterized by post-truth, facts and evidence are often disregarded in favor of emotional appeal, the influence of mainstream ideological narratives, and online personalities and charisma empowered by the number of followers on social media. The rise of echo chambers, where individuals are only exposed to views that align with their own beliefs, has amplified this effect. These digital spaces reinforce confirmation bias, making it harder to engage in constructive debate and to evaluate opposing viewpoints critically. In this climate, expertise – especially in the humanities, which relies on critical thinking, nuanced analysis, and historical context – appears to have lost its authoritative power. The rise of populism, which frequently rejects academic and scientific authority in favor of simplified or polarized views, has further eroded the space for expert knowledge. Rather than prioritizing well-researched insights, the public and political discourse increasingly gravitates toward populist sentiments that prioritize opinion over fact. As knowledge becomes widely accessible, yet less rigorously evaluated, the traditional role of scholars as gatekeepers of truth and critical thinking is becoming increasingly insignificant. The result is a weakening of the humanities' capacity to contribute meaningfully to public debate, as shallow and sensationalized interpretations of complex issues gain ground. In this context, the humanities have seemingly lost their central role in guiding informed, reflective, and critically engaged societies, and this phenomenon may even signify the "death of expertise".[44]

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[41] Ahram, Ariel I., Patrick Köllner, and Rudra Sil (eds): *Advancing Comparative Area Studies: Analytical Heterogeneity and Organizational Challenges* (New York, 2025; online edn, Oxford Academic, 19 June 2025), https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197809365.001.0001, accessed 19 June 2025. Prologue, xvi.

[42] Josef A. Kyburz: *Trends and Future Prospects of Japan Studies as an Academic Discipline*. In: P.A. George (ed.): *Japanese studies : changing global profile*. Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2010. p. 23.

[43] Hans Kuijper: *Comprehending the Complexity of Countries*, Springer Verlag, Singapore, 2021. First Chapter: The Enduring Confusion

[44] On this subject, see: Thomas M. Nichols: *The Death of Expertise: The Campaign against Established Knowledge and Why it Matters*, Oxford University Press, 2017.

If we move on to the critical voices about Japan/Japanese Studies, the claims – with which I fully agree with – can be distilled into four main points, as outlined by Ioannis Gaitanidis: (1) nation-centrism that risks apolitically equaling 'nation' to 'culture'; (2) an area focus that ignores the contingency of geographical units within global flows of communication and movement; (3) scholarly short-sightedness that employs theory to "explain out" its object of study and not the opposite; (4) serious positionality problem which effaces local perspectives.[45] It seems that critics agree that more discussion is needed on the political underpinnings; more analysis needed about the overall structure; more arguments needed on the theoretical implications and meanings; and more awareness is needed of the researchers' view of the object of Japan/Japanese Studies. It is important to note that the author of this book is just as critical of his own field of research, as he is of the widely indoctrinated ethnocentric perceptions and state-led propaganda about Hungary or Japan. Due to the points mentioned above, this study needs to be further elaborated and developed. Admittedly, this is not a simple task and requires more cooperation among experts in different countries and fields. Yet, there is a hope that taking the first step in this direction will encourage others to follow suit. I hope that fellow researchers – whether historians, area studies scholars at any level seeking new challenges or inspiration, citizen scientists, or independent researchers outside of academia – will find something in this book useful for investigating other under-researched bilateral relations. This example may even contribute to the rewriting of existing bilateral history research.

It would be great if someone took the initiative to compile a concise, interdisciplinary historiography of the transnational history of Central Eastern Europe and Japan, as there is a clear need for such a work. Researching the history of European relations with Japan is undoubtedly a complex endeavor, requiring a thoughtful and methodologically sound approach. Central to this undertaking is the explicit acknowledgment of cultural biases, both towards Japan and one's own identity. This reflective awareness is essential for ethical research and often lacking in existing works. Equally important is the commitment to methodological rigor. Many studies in this field are weakened by their reliance on mere chronological and descriptive narratives, reflecting an absence of systematic structural thinking. A robust methodology that transcends simple timelines is vital for producing meaningful scholarship. Interdisciplinarity lies at the heart of high-quality bilateral history research. The complexity of historical relations cannot be fully understood without drawing on multiple disciplines, including history, economics, sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, psychology, philosophy and political science. Tools and solutions in digital humanities should also be used whenever resources allow. Above all, intellectual quality should take precedence over purported or selective representativeness. The aim should never be to produce representative works that cater to soft power diplomacy or ideological-political agendas. Instead, the focus must be on attaining the highest standards of scientific rigor, objectivity, and intellectual depth. Defining a manageable timeframe is another cornerstone of effective research. Attempting to cover more than 50 years often results in diluted analysis, while focusing on a span of 20-50 years allows for greater depth and precision. Within these timeframes, research should prioritize discourse analysis,

[45] Ioannis Gaitanidis: *Critique of/in Japanese Studies: an Introduction to the Special Edition*, In: New Ideas in East Asian Studies 2017.

exploring narratives of the ‘Self’ and the ‘Other’ and examining their mutual constructions. (But in attempting to examine this question, it is worth pre-acknowledging that if the Other is a misrepresentation, the Self must be its grandest impersonator and vice versa. Both mislead, yet neither can exist without the other.) Particular attention should be paid to 19th-century travelogues and other texts that shaped perceptions of Japan. These narratives constitute a discourse of their own, constructing ideas about Japan that merit critical examination. Crucially, researchers must remain vigilant against Eurocentrism and self-Orientalism in their analysis. Eurocentrism can skew interpretations by imposing Western-centric frameworks that obscure or diminish local dynamics and voices. Self-Orientalism, where a society internalizes and perpetuates externally constructed stereotypes about itself, complicates the narratives of bilateral relations by blending external perceptions with internal adaptations. Addressing these phenomena is essential to ensure that research reflects a balanced and nuanced understanding of both parties in the relationship. It is equally important to avoid the pitfalls of presentism, the tendency to retroactively project contemporary ways of thinking onto historical periods. Such anachronistic approaches undermine the integrity of research. Instead, historical issues must be addressed openly and critically. Complex issues such as embedded racism, nationalism, xenophilia, allophilia, xenophobia must also be examined rather than avoided. Another often overlooked detail in bilateral history research is the application of symbolic precedence or protocol precedence in the naming of works. Bilateral histories written from a non-Japanese perspective should reflect this principle by placing Japan first in titles, such as "The History of Relations between *Japan* and Country X". This approach mirrors diplomatic etiquette, which prioritizes the symbolic importance of the other party. By adhering to this convention, scholars can demonstrate cultural sensitivity and reinforce the nuanced reciprocity that defines bilateral relations. Additionally, comparing the research findings with similar outputs in the histories of other bilateral relations is essential for a broader understanding. Underlying all of these principles is a critical stance that challenges assumptions and simplistic narratives.

Researching the history of bilateral relations is an epistemological journey. At its core, it is a process of learning more about how the in-group forms its perceptions – not with the preposterous aim of comprehending the out-group as the 'Other', as such a goal would be inherently hypocritical, but, more importantly, with the intention of a deeper exploration of the complex nature of human perception through this engagement.[46] Therefore, ideally, a well-crafted work in the history of bilateral relations with Japan can offer partial answers to even larger questions than it initially seems to address. It tackles

[46] There are assertions in academic literature that any effort, assertion, or claim to understand or know other peoples and cultures is fraught with challenges and risks. Such efforts and assertions imply a Eurocentric superiority, where Western or 'modern' modes of knowledge and intellectual traditions are considered more advanced than those of others. These Eurocentric assumptions about knowing the Other (often depicted as inferior) are contested by postcolonial theories, feminist critiques, critical race theorists, and poststructuralists. These postmodern approaches argue that 'knowing' or 'understanding', however defined, is inevitably framed as an exercise in power: an attempt to control the Other, to 'tame', 'consume', 'possess', or even 'devour' them. See: Kuokkanen, Rauna: *Indigenous Epistemes*. (2017). A Companion to Critical and Cultural Theory. Ed. I. Szeman, S. Blacker, and J. Sully. Wiley-Blackwell (2017). 313-326., Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3625835

these issues with disciplinary rigor, intellectual integrity, epistemic freedom, and, last but not least, should be written by self-aware researchers with real fire in the belly or epistemological curiosity for their topic (some call it the 'research itch'). It should not stem from a desire for fame, self-promotion, or a compulsion to conform to external pressures – be they political, ideological, cultural or financial – which, in my view, amount to nothing less than epistemic violence.

Lastly, this work is intentionally source-rich and dense, and scholars fuming about it have every right to see it as a cheeky little teasing of academia from someone who's not just outside of it, but absolutely delighted to be – more precisely, a very content, very happy outsider, maintaining his full integrity in his own capacity. At this point, I feel compelled to briefly share a rather personal story. A British Japanologist, cultural historian, expert in Japanese manuscripts, and Emeritus Professor of Japanese at a British University was kind enough to offer a brief 'evaluation' of my work in its half-ready state in the summer of 2025. After reviewing part of the manuscript, he suggested that the majority of the introductory chapters amounted to "*flogging a dead horse*",[47] and that such methodological thoroughness might not be deemed *necessary* for a book written in *English*. Sadly, he did not indicate which particular deceased horse he had in mind (though I suspect it is not a horse at all, but the *elephant in the room*), nor at what point this unfortunate horse managed to expire on the racecourses of Anglo-Saxon academic Japanology or cultural 'Japansplaining'. If keeping (unfortunately still) valid, fundamental questions afloat and presenting historiographically synthesized criticism are summarily treated as irrelevant (leading to swift dismissals lacking even the slightest engagement with the core substance), one might begin to wonder whether the 'dead horse' in question is truly dead – or simply irritatingly alive, much to the frustration of those academics who wish to see it completely dead, now and forever. To some readers, source-richness may pose an issue due to the perceived imbalance between historiographical narrative coherence and exhaustive, even overzealous, source usage. Many scholars caution against overloading a work with citations and sources, yet I would like to offer a counter-argument: a source-rich approach provides invaluable advantages – particularly when dealing with materials that are otherwise inaccessible due to language barriers, institutional restrictions, and academic paywalls. Hence, in my view, source-richness should not be seen as something that detracts from a monograph's value. On the contrary, an extensive source base enhances its scholarly utility and longevity. Scholars, students, and even the broader public often lack access to high-cost academic databases, let alone rare archival materials. A source-rich monograph functions as a bridge between 'restricted knowledge' and the wider intellectual community, expanding access beyond those privileged with institutional affiliations. Many of the most enduring works in history are consulted precisely because of their exhaustive documentation, making them indispensable for future research. Additionally, in an era

[47] "*(...) it has all the marks of a PhD thesis – huge number of citations and references. The first two giant introductory chapters cover a wide range of topics (...) each minutely analysed. (...) as a book in English a lot of (...) this kind of methodological thoroughness (...) seems like flogging a dead horse.*" P. K.'s brief opinion of my monograph, in an email, 15/06/2025

where digitally available sources are both expanding and disappearing at an alarming rate – whether due to ‘link rot’, institutional purges and reorganizations, shifting access policies, political censorship, or funding cuts limiting repository operations – a monograph that contextualizes sources serves as a durable intellectual resource. My intention was not only to compile a book based on a vast source base, but also to present arguments, provoke thought, and inspire further research. At the same time, I sought to curate, organize, and synthesize a broad range of intellectually invaluable perspectives, providing a foundation upon which future scholarship can build. These aspects should not be seen as flaws, particularly because they are accompanied by critical engagement and a firm methodological consciousness. While some might argue that this approach hinders narrative coherence, the very act of contextualizing and cross-referencing a vast range of sources allows for the emergence of new insights, connections, and interpretations that might otherwise remain obscured. This process transforms fragmented pieces of knowledge into a more structured whole – especially if future research is conducted as transnational collaborative projects with relevant institutional funding. Furthermore, it mitigates the risks of selective citation or historiographical bias, ensuring a more balanced and comprehensive perspective. A source-rich monograph empowers rather than constrains its readers – especially in sections where irony and humor is woven in to enhance the engagement and lighten the intellectual load. This endeavor should be seen as a unifying scholarly effort, countering the fragmentation of historical knowledge by bringing together a wide array of sources in a single, accessible work, fostering cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary engagement. It also challenges restrictive academic publishing norms, demonstrating that exhaustive documentation has a vital role in the humanities. All in all, my aim was to contribute meaningfully without making demotivating compromises – creating instead a durable, multipurpose scholarly tool: a neat, but perhaps slightly bulky, Leatherman for fellow scholars. Of course, any reader is free to approach my work as a mere catalog or an extended bibliography – and I would still consider that as evidence of my monograph’s value. To avoid sounding apologetic, I want to clarify that my goal was to create a history book I’d enjoy reading, filled with details I’d love to dive into. I can only hope others will find it useful as well.

At the end of the day, history can make us uncomfortable in unexpected ways. Yet, whether or not we bear the blame – spiraling into self-imposed guilt and despair – we can still learn much from statistical data, thought-provoking arguments, and even the innate irony and humor within. These aspects have the potential to open up new ways of thinking about the world we live in.

I submit these findings to my readers with the quiet confidence that, whatever deficiencies may mar the craft, the content shall yet arrest the attention. If I confess to a degree of assurance, let it be understood as rooted in the inexhaustible wonders of the subject at hand, rather than any vanity regarding my own abilities in the telling of it.

Official consular seal of Japan used in Austria

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Table of Contents:

Chapter Zero. Polygraphing Hungarian Perceptions of Japan in a Global Context

Lack of conflicts – Global and Local Narratives of Farness and Exoticism – Narratives of Closeness and National Exceptionalisms – The Value of Japan – Japan as a trigger for postmodern ideological and human rights activism – Japan Days – Literary Agents of Accidental Soft Power – The Western/semi-peripheral ego and its engagement with Japan – Japanophile engagement with Japan: a deep emotional charge – Women and Engagement with 'things Japanese' in Hungary – From Japanology to Japanese Studies in Europe: a brief overview of status, evolution, challenges, and embedded Japanophilia within – Japanophile circles and behavioural science – Criticism and Pitfalls of Japanophile-Criticism

Chapter One. Modernization

A peculiar coincidence between Hungary and Japan? – Global inequalities in the Great Divergence – Constitutional Transformations in the Late 1860s – The formation of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy – The Compromise and the administrative characteristics of the Monarchy – The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and its surroundings – The naming and the political autonomy within the Monarchy – Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as the melting pot of different ethnicities – National identity within the Hungarian Kingdom – Agriculture, industrialization and GDP in the Hungarian Kingdom – Economy, finance, education in the Hungarian Kingdom – Magyarization efforts – Urbanization and Budapest – Public health situation – Japan's external and internal issues in the second half of the 19th century – Education in Japan – The end of the Shogunate and the first part of the Meiji period – Financial situation of Meiji Japan – Rapid development in Japan – Newspapers and the press in Meiji Japan – Public health in Meiji Japan – Colonialism – Armed conflicts – Conclusion

Chapter Two. Expeditions

The evolution of marine sailing and the Double Monarchy's Navy in Asia – Expeditions to Japan: The Austro-Hungarian East Asian Expedition (1868-1871) – The Széchenyi Expedition (1877-80) – The Zrínyi Corvette with a Hungarian ship's doctor in Japan (1890-92) – Franz Ferdinand's journey to Japan (1892-93) – Japanese expeditions to the West, and the Iwakura mission

Chapter Three. Diplomacy and Foreign Trade

The meeting of Japan and Europe – The emergence of the Western powers in Japan – Unequal treaties between the great powers and Japan from the second half of the 19th century – The first era of globalization – The first phase of diplomatic relations between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Japan and the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation of 1869 – Revision of the unequal treaties – Foreign trade between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Japan – Diplomatic relations, diplomatic missions – Japanese honors awarded to Hungarians

Chapter Four. Lived Experiences and Knowledge Transfers: Travelers and Residents in Travelogues, Diaries, and Newspaper Articles

European travelers in Japan – Globetrotterism and Insiderism: Art, Bureaucracy, and the Realities of 'Being Foreign in Japan' – High Life and Lowdown in the Treaty Ports – Travel history of Hungarians traveling to Japan – Contemporary literature related to Japan written by Hungarian travelers – Methodological suggestions for researching travel literature and the representation of Japan – Visual representations in Hungarian travel literature – The Affordability of Japan: What a Traveler Spent in the 1910s Compared to Wages of the Time in Japan and Hungary – Travel history of Japanese traveling to the Kingdom of Hungary – Contemporary literature related to Hungary written by Japanese travelers – Japan in Hungarian Publications; Hungary in Japanese Publications – Crossing Paths Outside of Hungary and Japan - At Journey's End: Hungarians in the Yokohama Foreign Cemetery

Chapter Five. Relations in Culture, Literature, and Art

Foundations of Knowledge on Japan and Hungary – From Commerce to Art: Japan Steps Into the Spotlight – The Vienna World's Fair (Weltausstellung) of 1873: Processes and Contexts of Planning, Execution, and Impact – Japoniserie and Japonisme in the West and in the Kingdom of Hungary – Japonism(e) vs. Commercial Japan-Fever: Toward a Nuanced Understanding – Japan on Display in the Kingdom of Hungary – Collecting Japan in Hungary – The Influence of Japonism(e) on Hungarian Painting and Graphic Arts – Early Agoras of Commercial Japan-Fever in the Kingdom of Hungary – Japan-Fever in Hungarian Literature, Urban Legends, Music, Theatre and Film: From Pages to Stages – Hungarian Silent Films in Japan – Japan-Related Themes in Hungarian Architecture – Japan Fever, But Not for Profit: Balls for a Cause – Beyond Observation: A History of Japanese Language Teaching and Learning in Hungary – Japonisme and Japan-Fever in Hungary:

Ideological Retrospect and 21st-Century Misreadings by State-Aligned Scholars

Chapter Six. Ideas, National Ideologies

Tracing Origins: Magyar Ethnogenesis, the Hun-Hungarian Myth, and an Obsessed Inquiry into an Ainu Skull – Japanese travelers and thinkers on the Hungarians – Contemporary documents relating to the Hungarians in the collection of the National Diet Library of Japan – Between Japan and the West: "datsu-a" and "yellow peril" – The beginnings of Hungarian and Japanese Turanism, writings on Japanese-Hungarian kinship – An Enduring Undercurrent: A Never-Ending Trespass Where the Knowable Ends and Wishful Thinking Begins – Hungarian Political Japanophilia: Self-validation, Wishful Thinking, and Basking in the Reflected Popularity of the Other – Learning from Japan, Comparison with Japan: A Recurring Topos in Right-Wing Hungarian Political Thinking – The Orbán regime's Like-Hunting in Hungarian Media Using "things Japanese" – Japan as an Export Destination for the "Hungarian Model" – Japan Rates, Hungary Celebrates: The Hungarian Media's Fascination with Japanese Credit Ratings – Paper Hussars (b)owing to Paper Samurais: A Joyful Shadow Play Between Debtor and Creditor – Populist Stew: An Unhealthy Mix of Neo-Turanism and Political Japanophilia

Instead of a Summary: Concluding Thoughts on the Future of Research on Early Bilateral Relations Histories with Japan

Appendix

- *The Diplomatic Mission of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Japan*
- *Japan's Diplomatic Representation in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy*
- *Austro-Hungarian warships in Japan*
- *Japanese Literature Translated into Hungarian*

Author Biography

Bibliography

Chapter Zero.

Polygraphing Hungarian and European Perceptions of Japan in a Global-Historical Context

Lack of conflicts – Global and Local Narratives of Farness and Exoticism – Narratives of Closeness and National Exceptionalisms – The Value of Japan – Japan as a trigger for postmodern ideological and human rights activism – Japan Days – Literary Agents of Accidental Soft Power – The Western/semi-peripheral ego and its engagement with Japan – Japanophile engagement with Japan: a deep emotional charge – Women and Engagement with 'things Japanese' in Hungary – From Japanology to Japanese Studies in Europe: a brief overview of status, evolution, challenges, and embedded Japanophilia within – Japanophile circles and behavioural science – Criticism and Pitfalls of Japanophile-Criticism

Before beginning with Chapter One, I believe it is important to discuss embedded or learned perceptions. Throughout the book, you will see that there were various perceptions about Japan and the Japanese in the Hungarian Kingdom and in Europe at the turn of the century. We will delve into these perceptions in detail in the relevant chapters. This chapter may seem unconventional, but it is a crucial element in setting the tone of my research approach, which is in line with the points presented in the Foreword.[48] I would like to emphasise the importance of understanding the broader historiographical, semantic, topical, social and psychological context of Japan's reception in Hungary and in Europe. This is crucial because contemporary perceptions of Japan can significantly influence interpretations of early Japan–Hungary relations, as these perceptions shape how historical events and interactions between the two countries are understood and remembered. By showing how these perceptions have evolved over time (examined from various disciplines), we can gain a more nuanced basis for understanding of the factors that have shaped the interpretation of the relationship between these two countries. The author's stance is that the goal of understanding Japan is itself a way too ambitious and hypocritical endeavour. Instead, as a starting point, one

[48] The majority of this chapter is based on the author's presentation and a discussion held at the College of Social Theory of Corvinus+ELTE Universities, Budapest in March, 2023. The idea and inspiration of *virtually polygraphing* Hungarian Japan-perceptions came indirectly from Ms. Fusako Innami at Durham University (UK), who had a course titled *"Polygraphing Japonisme"* a few years ago. I'm grateful for her brilliant idea, which indirectly piqued my interest in the subject. Another motivation for writing this chapter, as well as rewriting and revising the entire book, was a review of my Hungarian monograph, written by Mátyás Mervay, a Hungarian Sinologist at New York University. In the review, he described it as "*useful but unprovocative*". Mátyás Mervay: *Gergely Tóth Japán-Magyar kapcsolattörténet 1869–1913. Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 2018. Pp. 352. (Book Review)* Austrian History Yearbook , Volume 51 , May 2020 , pp. 351-353.

should try to understand their own perceptions about Japan in its depth and entirety. More so, since Japan – or the imaginative and historical dimensions of what we call 'Japan' – is "*as much a discursive construct as it is an objective referent"*.[49] The next step, then, is to strategically and meticulously shed light on various subjects and phenomena in order to develop a systematic and interdisciplinary understanding of the multiple facets of Japan and its relations with Europe and Hungary.

After publishing my Hungarian monograph in 2018, I held several book launch events, talks, and presentations. During these events, I realised that the Hungarians are unaware of the roots and origins of their perceptions about Japan – they don't seem to know why they see Japan or the Japanese in a certain way. Even more concerning is the fact that there is little interest, either in public or in academic discussions, in examining this matter in depth. This public unawareness and lack of interest in understanding the matter intrigued me. After five years of meticulous source-collecting and discussions with numerous experts, I can now offer a few possible answers that could help in understanding how perceptions about Japan and the Japanese formed in Hungary over time and what can be said about current Hungarian perceptions about Japan. My investigation into the matter involves two main focuses: a macro focus, where I will examine global and local impacts and their relationship to each other, and a micro focus, where I will look at Hungarian individuals' motives and their relation to global and local processes. Since a thorough investigation of present-day Hungarian perceptions of Japan is not the main focus of this book, I will highlight some of the issues that may stimulate further academic and public discussion.

To begin with, Western perceptions and narratives of Japan can be understood as an interplay of two distinct narrative schemes: familiar (nearness) and unfamiliar (farness). This dynamic can be framed as a colonial discourse that creates a distinction between 'us' (the 'Self') and 'them' (the 'Other'). In the dichotomy of these narratives, otherness is always framed in terms of its difference from 'us'. The 'superiority' of 'us' (the 'Self') remains unmarked, so it must construct the 'Other' as 'inferior' in order to make sense of itself.

The prevailing perception of Japan in Hungary has remained consistently positive, leaving little room for critical reflection, both historically and in the present day. In order to support the current validity of such a claim, first, let's examine Question 6 in a 2020

[49] Marilyn Ivy: *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan, University of Chicago Press*, 1995. p. 1.

MOFA Japan survey conducted in England, Germany, Italy, France, and Hungary: "*What do you think about the current state of relationship between [YOUR COUNTRY] and Japan?*"[50] As the answers show, 68% of respondents in Hungary perceive the relationship as very/somewhat friendly, which reflects the average total percentage across all five countries. It might be noteworthy (or simply the result of a statistical margin of error) that Hungary has the lowest percentage of respondents who chose the "*somewhat unfriendly*" option. On top of that, Hungary has the second highest percentage in the "*Don't know / No idea*" category after France, while Germany has a significantly lower percentage.

Q6. What do you think about the current state of relationship between [YOUR COUNTRY] and Japan?

	Total	The UK	France	Germany	Italy	Hungary
Base: Those Answering	2500	500	500	500	500	500
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Very friendly relationship	18%	19%	24%	15%	18%	15%
Somewhat friendly	52%	48%	40%	65%	57%	53%
Somewhat unfriendly	5%	5%	4%	9%	6%	2%
Very unfriendly	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%
Don't know / No idea	23%	27%	30%	11%	20%	29%

Lack of conflicts

It is not surprising that 68% of respondents in Hungary perceive the relationship with Japan as very/somewhat friendly, given that there have been no conflicts or significant issues between the two countries in the past. Unlike neighbouring countries, or countries with considerably deeper ties to Japan, Hungary has not experienced mass migration, territorial disputes, economic conflict of interests or any other social, political sources of tension with Japan. Therefore, there are no feelings of threat, historical discontent or negative collective memory towards Japan in Hungary.[51] In other words, it

[50] https//www.mofa.go.jp/files/100187865.pdf (accessed: 2023 March)

[51] There are certain local tensions regarding the treatment of Hungarian workers' rights by some Japanese automotive companies (protests were organised in 2019 by the local Labour Union at Suzuki and Denso), and these issues make headlines from time to time. However, on a large scale, they have not affected the overall perception of Japan/Japanese in the public. According to a recent study, Hungarian economists generally view Japanese FDI (foreign direct investment) in Hungary favourably. See: Botond Kálmán and Arnold Tóth: *The Success of Japanese Foreign Market Investments in Hungary*. In: International Journal of Trade, Economics and Finance, Vol. 12, No. 4, August 2021; Currently there is no comprehensive academic literature on the cost-benefit analysis of the presence of Japanese automotive manufacturing companies in Hungary. A thorough, interdisciplinary analysis should include factors such as the economic impact, tax-exemption status, tax-paying practices, environmental impact, government subsidies, issues with indirect FDIs – where the ultimate owners conceal their identities – , and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices of these companies. See also: Csongrádi Gyöngyi, Engelberth István, Tóth Arnold: *A Japán működőtőke sajátos szerepe egy perifériális térségben Magyarországon (Salgótarján)* In: Szegedi, Krisztina (szerk.) Szemelvények a BGE kutatásaiból II. kötet Budapest, Magyarország : Budapesti Gazdasági Egyetem (2023) 339 p. pp. 68-73.

seems there are no Japanese threadlines in the thickly woven fabric of Hungarian national grievance. By way of contrast, in America, for instance, anti-Japanese movements began to emerge in California, Oregon and Washington, just a few years before the Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905). As Chris Suh points out:

> "(...) *nativists demanded that the federal government expand the scope of the existing Chinese Exclusion Act (...) to unilaterally prohibit the entry of Japanese immigrants. But the federal government refused to heed their demand. Instead, in 1908, the State Department committed to a bilateral "Gentlemen's Agreement" with the Japanese Foreign Ministry and entrusted the Asian empire with the task of limiting passports to those it deemed respectable representatives of Japan. This way, the US avoided institutioning an immigration law offensive to Japan, all the while putting an end to the immigration of the Japanese working class who constituted the vast majority of Japanese Americans. In contrast to their Chinese counterparts, Japanese working class men already in the United States were allowed, by the terms of the agreement, to sponsor the immigration of "picture brides" from Japan, who, in turn, put down roots by parenting US-born children. By the time of the 1910 census, the Japanese eclipsed the Chinese as the largest group of Asians in the continental United States, and they continued to grow not only in numbers but also in economic power. After the Gentlemen's Agreement went into effect, anti-Japanese arguments shifted away from claiming that Asians immigrants' low standard of living created unfair competition for the white working class. A new nativist movement contended instead that the federal policy enabled Japanese Americans to achieve a level of socioeconomic success that should be reserved for the 'white' races. Rage against the federal government came to a head in 1913, when California's legislature instituted the Alien Land Act, which prohibited all non-US-born Asians, including the Japanese, from owning agricultural property."*

If we take an example from Europe, during the 1930s, Japanese (and other Asian) expatriates living in France often experienced negative attitudes from the French following the Japanese invasion of China. World War II deepened France's negative view of Japan as an enemy allied with Germany and Italy, while the 1940 invasion of French Indochina cemented its image as imperialistic.[52] Later, Japan was seen as a negative

[52] Gardner, Sara: *The Perceptions and Practices of Japanese Identity in Contemporary France* (2022). Honors Theses. Paper 1348. https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/honorstheses/1348. p.6.

influence on Europe's political economy in the mid-twentieth century due to tough trade relations. In contrast, after the Cold War, Japan became a key global economic player, and by the 1990s, Japanese corporations were viewed as equal partners in European integration.[53]

Japanese gramophone booth, c. 1911 (Zenekereskedelmi Közlöny)

Global and Local Narratives of Farness and Exoticism

There seems to be a growing sensitivity among Western academics regarding the usage of expressions like the *'Orient'* or '*Far-East*'.[54] There are four main reasons why one would rather avoid using these terms. First, the exoticism within these words. Secondly, the connotations regarding the demonstrations of power of the modern Western empires. Thirdly, the misrepresentation of world geography, and fourthly, the misleading homogenization that lies within these expressions. The semantics of the narratives about Japan, as a 'Far-Eastern / Oriental culture', subconsciously represent Japan as exotic, and perpetuate demonstrations of power and simplified generalisations coming from the Western global centre.

It is indisputable that there is a lingering need in the global centre and its semi-periphery to mystify and occultize almost anything related to Japan – or more

[53] Hughes, Christopher W.: *Japan in Europe. Japan in Europe: Asian and European perspectives*. In: The Political Economy of Japanese Globalization, edited by Glenn D. Hook and Hasegawa Haruukiyo, Routledge, 2001, p. 65.
[54] Christopher Hill: *What's the Matter with Saying 'The Orient'?* https://aboutjapan.japansociety.org/whats_the_matter_with_saying_the_orient#sthash.UIcgg98m.qRMrTx1O.dpbs (accessed: 2023 March)

precisely, to the *idea* of Japan.[55] As Philip Hammond puts it, "*the established exoticism of Japan means that virtually anything can be presented as evidence of the peculiarity of the Japanese"*.[56] Nowhere is this more visible than in certain museum practices, where some curator's primary objective appears to be overwhelming idle onlookers with the display of Japanese objects, while simultaneously meeting implicit narrative expectations from Japanese cultural diplomacy and its soft power, all without providing any meaningful education or deeper critical discourse.[57] This does not hold true for Japan-related exhibitions held in Vienna in recent years, where one can find a series of (self-)critical and educative exhibitions. (The latest addition to this lineup is '*Wiener Weltausstellung 1873 Revisited: Ägypten und Japan als Europas 'Orient*', an exhibition at MAK Vienna.[58])

The first comprehensive exhibition about Japonism(e) in Hungary opened in 2016, and the title of the exhibition was undeniably exoticizing: "*Geishas by the Danube"* (*Gésák a Duna-parton*). Right after the opening, the exhibition drew the attention of a Japanese teacher who has been a resident of Hungary for decades. She wrote an article about it in which she expressed her initial aversion about the title.

> "*When I heard the title of the exhibition – Geishas by the Danube – I became even more interested. I was wondering what did the geishas do on the banks of the Danube during the history of Hungarian fine and applied arts? Would the geisha symbolise Hungarian Japonism? The images that spread about Japan all over the world – Mount Fuji, geisha, harakiri – are typical stereotypes, extremely mundane for the average Japanese. We Japanese are not happy to hear the concept of geishas in this context. At least for a Japanese woman, a geisha was never a beauty ideal. I was amazed that in the 21st century the word 'geisha' could still attract an audience abroad for an exhibition with a Japanese subject. As a Japanese woman, I wanted to find out why the word was included in the title of the exhibition."*[59]

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[55] Jeff Humphries: *Images of the Floating World: The Idea of Japan*. The Antioch Review Vol. 53, No. 4, (Autumn, 1995), pp. 389-410.

[56] Hammond, Phil (1999). *The Mystification of Culture: Western Perceptions of Japan*. International Communication Gazette, 61(3-4), 311–325.

[57] There is a great paper about the historiography of early 'orientalising' in museum settings in America: Logan Ward: *Museum Orientalism: East versus West in US American Museum Administration and Space, 1870-1910. Part One.* The Coalition of Master's Scholars on Material Culture, 1, October 1, 2021.; Ma, Scott. 2023: *The Politics of Curating Japonisme: International Art Exhibition and Soft Power in Contemporary Japanese Cultural Diplomacy.* Journal of Japonisme 8 (1):31-66. doi: 10.1163/24054992-08010001

[58] https://www.mak.at/weltausstellung The exhibition was open in between July and October in 2023.

[59] Sato Noriko : *Japán szemszögből : a Gésák a Duna-parton című kiállításról*, In: Új művészet 1-2. (2017. január-február) pp. 12-15. The passage was translated into English by myself. Further reading on the history of Geishas: Stanley, Amy: *Enlightenment Geisha: The sex trade, education, and feminine ideals in early Meiji Japan*. In: Journal of

During an informal discussion with one of the curators of the Hungarian exhibition, the co-curator expressed a sense of sadness and regret about the title clearly not being appropriate. In the end, the exoticizing promotion did not really do the trick: the exhibition only received some 3000 visitors in three months despite the central location, the involvement of the biggest Hungarian national museums and private collectors, and the organisation of an international conference with invited speakers. Despite all these efforts, the exhibition did not gain recognition from local or international art historians. I visited the exhibition several times and although I appreciated the meticulous visual displays, comparisons and the large number of exhibited objects, I found the exhibition lacked an intellectually challenging, self-reflexive critical and educative narrative. Parallel to the Hungarian Japonism(e) exhibition, another on Nordic Japonism, titled "*Japanomania in the North 1875-1918: The Influence of Japan on Nordic Art and Design"*, toured three Nordic countries during 2016 and 2017. The exhibition was criticized for lacking a critical approach, as it focused almost entirely on the visual and aesthetic aspects of Nordic modernism, neglecting the socio-political contexts and the cultural and political exchanges between the Nordic countries and Japan during a time when both regions were struggling to define their roles in the world.[60] It seems that for the curators of these Japonism(e) exhibitions in Hungary and the Nordic countries, critically exploring the relationship between Orientalism and Japonism(e) – both as aesthetic properties and discourses – was, for some reason, considered irrelevant and unimportant. We could endlessly enumerate examples, but let me introduce a seemingly subtle issue whose roots run even deeper than one might think. In 2023, at the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts in Budapest, a year-long curatorial presentation series on Asian collections was framed with an interesting title: "*Curators' Initiational Series*" (*Kurátori Beavató Előadássorozat*). It is noteworthy that the Hungarian word for *'initiational'* (beavató) was used instead of a more neutral word like *'introduction(al)'* (bevezetés/bevezető) in the Hungarian title. Needless to say, the feeling of *initiation* evokes the action or a ceremony of admitting someone into a secret or obscure society or religious group, typically with a ritual. Therefore, through its choice of wording, the museum is perpetuating deeply rooted 'mystical oriental' stereotypes in the Hungarian public – and not surprisingly, similar examples can be observed in other museums and

Asian Studies. 2013 ; Vol. 72, No. 3. pp. 539-562.

[60] Gunhild Borggreen: *Crazy about Japan. Japonisme in Nordic Art and Design on Display*. In: Orientaliska Studier 2017/02, p. 172.

exhibitions in the world.[61] It is undeniable that certain curatorial narratives and practices serve specific needs arising from the general public and Japanese soft power diplomacy. For example, Scott Ma argues that in the 2018 *Japonismes* exposition in Paris (the largest official exposition of Japanese culture abroad in decades, that took place from July 2018 to February 2019 and which attracted over 3.5 million visitors), the Japanese government clearly made "*political use of the trope of a timeless, mystical, and animistic Japanese sense of beauty that supposedly unites prehistoric pottery, contemporary comics and animation*".[62]

Apart from museum practices, there are several public lectures or events with a distinctive 'fabulative' narrative character, where 'things Japanese' appear as if they were taken from a fairy tale, and where the lecturer acts as a storyteller.[63] But even more prevalent is another global phenomenon: the unique Japanese version of an obscure *untranslatable feel-good concepts* genre in the esoteric self-help literature section of bookstores.[64] These books are usually labelled with something like: "*The Secret Japanese Art of …*". The usual method behind these books is that a Japanese word is taken out of its original context, and it gets hyper-mysticized and hyper-exoticized to

[61] This observation was further reinforced by a television program from the summer of 2024, where the director of the Hopp Museum spoke about the role of the museum. She emphasized 'initiation', likening their role to a *Buddhist initiational ceremony*. It is quite obvious that the director envisions the museum as a sacralized medium or space that helps average people become *initiated* into the 'orientalizing mystical sacrality' of the 'East,' which, in reality, is nothing but a lineup of shallow, Western self-healing mental-wellness activities commodified through the orientalized Western notion of Asia. The fact that the museum is heavily investing in organizing spiritual, mystical orientalist workshops lately, is another worrying sign of this trend. This is in stark contrast with their mission statement, which values the "*scientific introduction* to Eastern cultures". Magyar Krónika: *A tea útja* 2024.06.18.: https://mediaklikk.hu/video/magyar-kronika-a-tea-utja/; Mission Statement of the Museum: https://hoppmuseum.hu/mission-statement (accessed: 2024 July)

[62] Ma, Scott. 2023. *The Politics of Curating Japonisme: International Art Exhibition and Soft Power in Contemporary Japanese Cultural Diplomacy.* Journal of Japonisme 8 (1):31-66. doi: 10.1163/24054992-08010001

[63] Similar narratives can be observed in contemporary German short stories about Japan. In these stories, one can find a longstanding cliché: Japan appears as a riddle, shrouded in mystery, a land that cannot be penetrated by the inquisitive gaze of the Westerner, as the magical and the unreal constitute decisive elements of its nature. Gabriele Eichmanns: *Orbiting around the Void: Emptiness as Recurring Topos in Recent German Short Stories on Japan*. In: Beyond Alterity: German Encounters with Modern East Asia, Berghahn Books, 2014, pp. 240–60. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt9qd93f.16. Accessed 6 June 2023.; See also the critical review of a prominent work of Polish Orientalist literature on Japan: Katarzyna Marak: *Polskie Japonie: Orientalistyczny obraz Japonii w Japońskim wachlarzu Joanny Bator.* 2010, Japoński Soft Power https://www.academia.edu/12484413/Polskie_Japonie_Orientalistyczny_obraz_Japonii_w_Japo%C5%84skim_wachlarzu_Joanny_Bator (accessed: 2025 JAN)

[64] A brief selection of English titles in the genre of Japanese self-help literature: Albert Liebermann: *Ganbatte! The Japanese Art of Always Moving Forward* (Boston: Tuttle, 2021); Candice Kumai: *Kintsugi Wellness: The Japanese Art of Nourishing Mind, Body, and Spirit* (New York: Harper Wave, 2018); Héctor Garcían and Francesc Miralles: *Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life* (London: Penguin, 2017). These works indulge in the most egregious forms of Orientalist fantasies commonly held by Western readers about Japanese society, language, and culture. On the business side, opportunistic publishers seem eager to cater to Japanophiles with uplifting portrayals of Japan, targeting a conditioned audience unwilling or unable to critically assess the society they idealize. See: Thomas Baudinette: *Pure Invention or Pure Fantasy? A Critical Review of a Popular History of Transnational Japanese Media Fandom*. In: Journal of the Society for Asian Humanities 2022., p. 361. https://doi.org/10.3316/informit.943064906261933

emphasise the supposed *unique Japanese concept* behind it, reproducing the notion of *Japan as unique and mystical*. For instance, the term “shinrin-yoku” (forest bathing) might be *elegantly* translated as “*The Japanese Art and Science of Getting Off Your Couch and Taking a Walk Outside*”. The implication behind this is that a *simple act of taking a walk in nature* is not the same, because *shinrin-yoku* is considered *distinctly Japanese*. Just to give another example in the never-ending lineup of these books: the “KonMari Method” (a decluttering and organising method developed by Marie Kondo, a Japanese organising consultant and author) can be instantly transformed into “*The Life-Changing Japanese Magic of Tidying Up*”.[65]

Even early commercial selling strategies from the 1860s played into the emulation of the feeling of exoticism and mystical obscurity, especially in so-called curio shops in London, Paris and New York.[66] In the shady corners of curio shops, customers could experience 'badauderie' and discover 'trouvailles' in a Capernaum of ‘exotic goods’, including colonial and Asian artefacts and ethnographic pieces.[67]

A postcard from Budapest dated 1900, addressed to Gabriella Háader (private collection)

When stereotyping the Japanese, Western people often resort to cultural or

[65] These half-imaginary, but very typical examples are taken from a Twitter thread shared by Anoma van der Veere, a researcher at Leiden University, which highlights the often absurd and culturally essentialist ways that some Japan-related books are marketed to readers. https://twitter.com/AnomaV/status/1367763990848282626 (accessed: 2023 March).

[66] Manuel Charpy: *‘Trading Places’. Acquiring Cultures: Histories of World Art on Western Markets*, edited by Bénédicte Savoy, Charlotte Guichard and Christine Howald, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2019, pp. 71-100.

[67] "badauderie" is a French word that refers to the behaviour of being a "badaud," which means a gawker, a spectator, or an idle onlooker; "trouvailles" is a French word that means "discoveries" or "treasures"

psychological essentialism, assuming that all members of a given group are the same, ascribing certain visible features of an out-group individual to the entire group, and treating certain out-groups as if they were representing a homogeneous political or cultural unit. Certain features are stereotypically attributed to a given out-group to the extent that a *lack of such features* calls an individual's membership into question. So, the psychological mechanisms that rule the relation to Japan as an 'exotic other' are also homogenising and anchoring the stereotypical features, and strengthening the explicit/implicit exoticism feeling towards Japan or the Japanese.[68] To introduce a layer of delicate complexity, some argue that stereotypes are not mere simplistic or fixed images of a social group as a result of some sort of mental error or bias (as proposed in the traditional view of stereotypes), but rather they are social constructions based on the ideology of the cultural group *doing* the stereotyping.[69] Sara Rodríguez Fernandez provided an excellent evolutionary roadmap in her end-of-degree thesis, showing the main positive and negative Western stereotypes in certain historical periods, noting that these stereotypes intermingle and overlap, having historically coexisted and continuing to do so in the present. As Sarah emphasizes, "*the dates below are approximations – they mark the peak of the success or increased presence of this stereotypical Japanese identity. (...) All these representations survive today, in one form or another, and can still be seen in cultural products.*"[70]

	Historical Moment	**Main elements**	**Positive associations**	**Negative associations**
Samurais and Geishas	XVII.-XIX. Century	Strong discipline, ethical influence of Confucianism, fight against Western modernisation	Honour, respect for tradition, cult of knowledge, bravery, exotic	Violence, social isolation, seriousness, rigid social structure, blind obedience, seen from orientalist perspective
Japanese imperialism	1895-1945	Social Darwinism, rural vindication, militarism, nationalism	Strength, loyalty, strong social cohesion, bond with the country and the emperor, obliging	Aggressiveness, excessive violence, cruelty, betrayal, unscrupulousness, suicides
The Japanese businessman	1952-1991	Efficiency, constant improvement (Kaizen),rapid	Culture of effort, entrepreneurial commitment, production	Inflexibility, overexploitation, depression,

[68] see the summary on psychological essentialism: https://www.psychologs.com/article/psychological-essentialism (accessed: 2023 March)
[69] Perry R. Hinton: *Stereotypes and the Construction of the Social World,* Routledge*,* 2020.
[70] Sara Rodríguez Fernandez: *De Hirohito A Hello Kitty: La Transformación De La Imagen Japonesa Desde La Perspectiva Occidental*. Universidad Complutense Madrid, End-Of-Degree-Thesis, 2024. The table here is republished with the acknowledgement and permission of the author, Sara Rodríguez Fernandez.

		industrialisation, cutting-edge technology, financial and business district	quality, hospitality, respect for others	submission, karoshi, strict social norms, cheating strategies
The Cool Japanese	1989-2008	Urban environments, neon cities, individualism, artistic flourishing and economic stagnation	Alternative, avant-garde, novel, attractive, profound, philosophical, original fashion and video games	Grotesque, strange, blasé attitude, pessimism, demoralisation, deodorised, difficult to understand, loneliness epidemic
The Kawaii Culture	2002-2020	Focus on women and children, cartoons, pastel shades, return to commerce	Adorable, inoffensive, innocent, cosy, consumer appeal	Emasculating, childish, vain, hypersexualised subtexts, lack of independence

Summary table of the transformation of the Japanese Image from the Western point of view (17th century – present day) by Sara Rodríguez Fernandez

There is an argument that when Westerners attempt to "*make sense of Japan and/or the Japanese*", they do this in terms of their own cultural expectations, as well as "*seeking to understand"* the Japanese in terms of the current state of the relationship between the West and Japan. Some argue that Western representations of Japan are neither definitively right nor wrong, but instead, involve complex issues of meaning-making within the context of perceived cultural differences and intercultural relationships.[71] That said, some examples here present a clear-cut counterpoint to this argument: they reveal the fact that, in most cases, there is no inherent need to objectively comprehend Japan or the Japanese. No real necessity exists to extract any objective meaning from anything related to Japan. Rather, it becomes evident that most of the narratives about 'Japan' (as the Other) are employed in order to gain profits and/or to counterbalance (or to mask) imperfections and insecurity within the psyche, the identity and the collective ideology of the European Self. According to J. Victor Koschmann, the concept of an Asian identity was shaped by the creation of the 'Orient' as Europe's contrasting 'Other'. Europeans needed this contrast to define their own identity, which involved subordinating Asia.[72] Originally, the Greeks invented the concept of Asia to mark cultural and geographical differences. By the 19th century, Western Orientalist discourses had solidified this idea, portraying Asia as backward and stagnant compared to the progressive West.[73] At this point, we can also delve into the realm of cultural dialogue, which seems to tend towards a monologue, not just because of one side's conscious or unconscious arrogance, but

[71] Perry R. Hinton: *The Japanese in the Western Mind – A Psychological History of the Cultural Other*, Routledge, 2023.
[72] Koschmann, J. V. (1997) *Asianism's Ambivalent Legacy.* In: Katzenstein, P. J. and Shiraishi, T. (Ed.) Network Power. Cornell University Press. London
[73] Duus, P. (2001) *The "New Asianism" in Holzhausen*. In: A. (Ed.) Can Japan Globalize? Physica-Verlag. New York

"*more likely because we do not pay sufficient attention, neither to the mechanisms connected with dialogue across cultures nor to the mechanisms that allow us to unconsciously ignore our own predisposition*".[74] Cultural interactions between Japan and Europe can be analysed through the concept of intersubjectivity. Intersubjectivity is defined as the variety of relations between perspectives, where the individual perspectives can belong to individuals, groups, or discourses and traditions, and they can manifest themselves as both implicit, taken for granted and explicit, or reflected upon. Intersubjectivity can be used to evaluate, analyse intercultural connections, in order to reveal certain meta-meanings.[75] Alongside intersubjectivity, another concept could prove valuable when analysing cultural exchanges: Antonio Gramsci's idea of cultural hegemony (or just hegemony, defined as the result of one powerful force – an exploiting class – tendency to wish to control another, subjected class).[76] In Gramsci's idea, the Western world is the hegemonic, dominant culture that has the "built-in right" to dictate ways of life to anyone differing from them.[77]

As stated by Toshio Miyake, Orientalism,[78] and Japanese Self-Orientalism in particular, are consequences of modern Eurocentric hegemony. However, there can be no effective hegemony without the active consent of the subaltern sides.[79] This hegemony is effective because there is a mutual interplay of Occidentalism intermingling with both Orientalism and Self-Orientalism. Toshio Miyake sums it up as follows (in regards Occidentalism):

> *"(...) Occidentalism has been a self-definition as the 'West', first in Europe and then in the United States, that is articulated via intertwined paradigms aimed at defining its identity as modern: universalism, reason, science, progress, individualism, masculinity, the white race, adulthood, technology, etc. Like any kind*

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[74] Hans Dorsch: *Civilization Dialogue between Europe and Japan: Or the strange case of N. F. S. Grundtvig and* 日本, 2017 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317351291_Civilization_Dialogue_between_Europe_and_Japan_Or_the_strange_case_of_N_F_S_Grundtvig_and_riben (accessed: 2023 aug)

[75] Hans Dorsch: *Civilization Dialogue between Europe and Japan: Or the strange case of N. F. S. Grundtvig and* 日本, 2017

[76] Perry Anderson: *The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci*. New Left Review. New Left Review. (100): 5–78., 1976

[77] Hans Dorsch: *Civilization Dialogue between Europe and Japan: Or the strange case of N. F. S. Grundtvig and* 日本, 2017

[78] On the website https://www.orientalismstudies.com/ (accessed: 2024 Sept.), a site dedicated to the study of Orientalism using English-language sources, Herb Swanson has listed 94 different types of Orientalism in a comprehensive glossary. The glossary covers a wide range of interpretations, from 'Academic Orientalism' to more nuanced concepts such as 'Latent Orientalism' and 'Aesthetic Orientalism'.

[79] Toshio Miyake: "*Towards Critical Occidentalism Studies Re-inventing the 'West' and 'Japan' in Mangaesque Popular Cultures*". In: Ca' Foscari Japanese Studies 3 – Contemporary Japan Challenges for a World Economic Power in Transition edited by Paolo Calvetti, Marcella Mariotti, 2015, p. 96.

of hegemonic identity, it is not limited to an isolated or homogeneous paradigm. Occidentalism relies on its ability to intersect very different axes of social-cultural identification regarding nation, class, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age (...) On the intra-national level within societal relations, this cumulative intersectionality is what enables Occidentalism to mobilise and to be sustained at the same time by very different modes of representation, practice and emotion, cross-cutting institutionalised and highly formalised knowledge as well as popular and everyday common sense. This leads it to finally permeate every dimension of human existence, ultimately resulting in its most effective form: self evidence, naturalisation and, eventually, invisibility."[80]

As for Orientalism, Toshio Miyake's summary is as follows:

"Depending on context and period, the non Euro-American subaltern could be defined as the 'East', the 'Rest', 'Islam', 'Asia', 'Africa' or even a single nation-state and its people as 'Japan' and the 'Japanese'. It is Orientalism as a process of contrastive and explicit othering that has contributed in modern age to shape, by binary opposition, Euro-American identity, enabling the very idea of 'West' to remain in many cases implicit or unmarked as the universal norm. If (...) unmarked identification with the 'West' relies basically on the idea, or desire, of being the exclusivist author and owner of a superior modernity and its constituting paradigms, then the construction of the subaltern 'oriental' or 'eastern' other will be, or must be, marked as a non-Western and non-modern other. In order to make sense of Euro-American identity as universal and modern, the non Euro-American other must be configured as a cumulative intersection of tradition inspiring paradigms, such as particularism, emotionality, stasis, groupism, femininity, coloured race, infancy, nature, etc. (...) The consequence is a constant generation of 'oriental' others functioning as identity mirrors: to be (re)discovered and explained (academic Orientalism), to be educated and reformed (paternalistic Orientalism), to be despised and hated (racist Orientalism), to be fantasised and desired (exoticistic Orientalism). (...) An innovative specificity of this Orientalism is induced by the unexpected intrusion of Japan in world history not only as an Asian nation-state undergoing rapid modernisation, but also as the first to threaten the

[80] Toshio Miyake: "*Towards Critical Occidentalism Studies Re-inventing the 'West' and 'Japan' in Mangaesque Popular Cultures*". In: Ca' Foscari Japanese Studies 3 – Contemporary Japan Challenges for a World Economic Power in Transition edited by Paolo Calvetti, Marcella Mariotti, 2015, pp. 96-98.

Euro-American monopoly of modernity, resulting in a specific double Orientalism of Japan. One part of this Euro-American othering process is the classical and well-tested configuration of Japan as a place of 'oriental' or 'eastern tradition' antithetical to 'western modernity', generating a rich repertoire of popular icons: Shintō, Zen, samurai, geisha, tea ceremony, martial arts, mount Fuji, love for nature, bucolic community, etc. The more those icons are unilaterally selected for their potential to inspire ideas and emotions related to tradition, or even pushed far away towards an extreme and remote past, the more they become effective to affirm by contrastive and implicit dualism Euro-American identity as modern. The result is Japan as hyper-tradition: a place where selected features of archaism, classicism or feudalism tend to be so exaggerated that they seem out of time and out of space, evoking an ultimately decontextualized other, dispersed in some mythical and a-historical dimension. The representation of past or present Japan as the quintessence of tradition becomes available for both nostalgic desire and paternalistic contempt, regardless of their apparent pro- or anti-Japanese intentions: a place of authentic, religious, aesthetic, intuitive and natural harmony, uncontaminated by the artificial contradictions of modernity, or on the contrary, a place of retarded progress and underdeveloped emancipation, eternally imprisoned by its atavistic dependence to the laws of nature, ritual formalism and mystic irrationality."[81]

Japanese cabinet-style tansu (箪笥), late Meiji period (c. 1890–1910, private collection)

[81] Toshio Miyake: "*Towards Critical Occidentalism Studies Re-inventing the 'West' and 'Japan' in Mangaesque Popular Cultures*". In: Ca' Foscari Japanese Studies 3 – Contemporary Japan Challenges for a World Economic Power in Transition edited by Paolo Calvetti, Marcella Mariotti, 2015, p. 96-98.

Alongside the concepts above, we should also consider colonialism and its postmodern critique. Hungary's embeddedness in colonialism and the application of Western narratives about Meiji Japan becomes even more interesting when examining the widely believed notion that Hungary did not have colonies. According to some arguments, this is why Hungary has nothing to do with any recent postcolonial criticism. In fact, as part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Hungarian Kingdom was indeed part of the colonial context (between 1867 and 1914), and Hungarians gained comparative advantages from direct, indirect or inner colonialism.[82] The Hungarian Kingdom had even taken part in the thinly veiled semi-colonialism that emerged in Japan right after 1868, through the so-called unequal treaty system imposed by Western empires on Japan at that time. (More about this will be discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Four.) The notion of colonial exceptionalism has led to the assumption that not just the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, but even Nordic countries, the Czechs, and the Poles (before their statehood) did not engage in colonialism. In fact, historical evidence suggests otherwise. Denmark and Sweden pursued significant colonial ventures, with the Danish West India Company active in Africa, Asia, and North America, while Sweden's New Sweden Company operated in the Americas and the Caribbean. Despite lacking sovereignty, Poland also exhibited colonial aspirations – most notably through explorer Stefan Szolc-Rogozinski's attempted colony in Cameroon (1882–83), backed by Polish intellectuals. Similarly, Czech figures such as Emil Holub promoted settlement projects in Africa, and institutions like the Náprstek Museum reinforced colonial fantasies through the collection and display of exotic artifacts.[83]

Investigating Hungary's position in the European discourse could also yield valuable contributions to our understanding of the formation of narratives about intercultural relations. The concept of 'Europe' serves as the defining element of the modernization ideology, owing to its historical position atop certain comparisons (e.g., between Europe and Hungary, or Europe and Eastern Europe). Some researchers consider 'Europe' a hyperreal concept that refers to certain associations, but its geographical equivalent remains somewhat undefined, therefore the idea of a homogeneous, unquestionable Europe disintegrates during any analysis. Just as the

[82] See the works of Zoltán Ginelli: https://zoltanginelli.com/category/english-blog/ (accessed: 2023 March); see also: Mathieu Gotteland: *Austro-Hungarian Informal Imperialism in China, 1869–1917* Journal of Austrian Studies, Volume 56, Number 2, Summer 2023, pp. 31-40 https://doi.org/10.1353/oas.2023.0022

[83] Balogun, Bolaji, and Markéta Křížová: *The Varieties of European Colonialism in Central and Eastern Europe: The Polish and the Czech Cases*. In: Interventions, September, 2024. pp. 2-10. doi:10.1080/1369801X.2024.2400347.

phenomenon of Orientalism[84] does not vanish merely due to some researchers being critical of it, similarly, Europe, often defined and lauded as the cradle of modernity, continues to wield dominance in the discourse on history, and analysis alone cannot eliminate it.[85] In discussions about defining the boundaries of Europe, an often-quoted saying frequently arises. It is widely claimed that Metternich, Austria's leading diplomat and statesman in the early 19th century, marked the Eastern boundary of Europe by saying, "*The Balkans begin at the Landstraße*" or "*Asia begins at the Rennweg*" (in Vienna).[86] Yet, no contemporary source confirms that he ever made such a remark. Scholars have found no primary evidence for these attributions, and they are generally regarded as apocryphal sayings that emerged later rather than authentic statements by Metternich. The reference to the "Balkans" likely meant the non-German-speaking parts of Austria, often called the "East" or even "Asia" due to their historical connection to Ottoman rule. These regions, reclaimed by Austria after the Ottoman retreat following 1683, were seen as culturally distinct and often treated as peripheral within the empire.

Hungary's position in relation to Europe is often characterised as a quantitatively diminished, inferior rendition of the region exalted as qualitatively and morally superior.[87] Another theory worth adding to the ones discussed above comes from world-systems theorist Immanuel Wallerstein, who argues that from an economic perspective, Central Eastern Europe can be understood as a semi-peripheral region.[88] In the literature, one can also find the widely used term *Euro-Orientalism*, which refers to Western stereotypes and essentialized views of Eastern Europe, similar to how the Orient is portrayed in traditional Orientalism, thereby creating barriers to genuine engagement with the region.[89] The American writer and historian, Jacob Mikanowski, argues that the idea of Eastern Europe is rapidly disappearing – or even gone already.[90] In the Western perspective, the

[84] There is a great paper discussing the Central Eastern European reception and the critical voices in the region about Edward Said's Orientalism: Róbert Gáfrik: *Chapter 11: Imagining the Orient in Central Europe: An Intercultural Studies Project* In: Rebuilding the Profession: Comparative Literature, Intercultural Studies and the Humanities in the Age of Globalization. Essays in Honor of Mihai I., Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, Göttingen, 2020.
[85] Dipesh Chakrabarty: *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000., p. 28.
[86] *der Balkan auf der Landstraße beginnt; der Balkan beginnt am Rennweg; Asien beginnt auf/an dem/der Landstraße/Rennweg*, etc. We probably need to pause for a second here, as 'Österreich' actually means 'Eastern Empire' in German, while 'Austria' comes from the Latin "*Marchia Austriae"* or "*marchia austriaca"*, meaning "Eastern Borderlands" (of Charlemagne's empire).
[87] Böröcz József: *A jóság máshol van – az Európán belüli másság szabálya*, Replika, 2020 (115–116): pp. 69–97.
[88] Immanuel Wallerstein: *Semi-Peripheral Countries and the Contemporary World Crisis*; Theory and Society Vol. 3, No. 4 (Winter, 1976), pp. 461-483.
[89] Mart Kuldkepp: *Western Orientalism Targeting Eastern Europe: An Emerging Research Programme*. In: Central European Journal of International and Security Studies Volume 17, Issue 4, 2023., pp. 64–80.
[90] Jacob Mikanowski: *Goodbye, Eastern Europe!* Essay appeared in Los Angeles Review of Book Online (January 27,

region was bound together by shared experiences of occupation and exclusion, by the seemingly enduring weight of economic backwardness, and by the treasured memories of defeat. His argument is that all of this has already faded, or at least is not as prominent as it once was. During the era of state socialism, discussing the division of Europe was logical. The Iron Curtain created distinct sides. Eastern Europe appeared as a cohesive region, particularly from an external perspective. (Even today, especially in America, it might still be perceived as a sort of post-communist space.) Although, with Eastern Europe succumbing to the homogenising forces of globalisation and prosperity, it is in the process of being forgotten as a diminished entity that once served only as a backdrop for other people's fantasies. Eastern Europe became a periphery like any other. Mikanowski summarises the once-prevailing Western notions about Eastern Europeans in this way:

> "*It's always a bit humiliating to read an English-language book with an Eastern European character. You never know if they're going to be a world-weary janitor (a Pole), a captivating fraud (a Hungarian), a post-Communist gangster (a Serb), or a source of erotic awakening for a literary-minded man (a Czech for Americans, any of the above for residents of Ireland and the United Kingdom).*"

If one wants to talk and think about Eastern Europe beyond stereotypes one would talk about it as a place of unexpected cosmopolitanism, a constellation of microregions whose individual parochialism and self-involvement add up to something bigger than the sum of their parts. Nevertheless, understanding Eastern Europe, its literature, and its history remains pivotal for comprehending the 20th century. Undoubtedly, Eastern Europe possesses its own diversity, modernity, and conflicting avant-gardes. As Mikanowski argues: "*The truth is that Eastern Europe belongs less to the geography recorded in road atlases than to psychogeography. It isn't really a place, but a state of mind.*" Without a doubt, a distinct Eastern European confusion of identities is persistent: Mikanowski cites the playwright Ödön von Horváth (1901-1938), who embodied a prototypical Eastern European identity, describing himself as "*a very typical mix of old Austria-Hungary: simultaneously Magyar, Croatian, German, and Czech*", identifying his "*country as Hungary, [and his] mother tongue as German.*" [91]

2017) https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/goodbye-eastern-europe/ (accessed: 2023 Aug)

[91] Jacob Mikanowski: *Goodbye, Eastern Europe!* Essay appeared in Los Angeles Review of Book Online (January 27, 2017) https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/goodbye-eastern-europe/ (accessed: 2023 Aug)

Narratives of Closeness and National Exceptionalisms

We can find many narratives revolving around the comparisons and commonalities between Japan and Europe (or the global centre). Even pseudoscientific narratives of Social Darwinism, which promoted Western national exceptionalism and xenophobia, made their way to Japan and have a Japanese version in the form of Nihonjinron (discourses on the Japanese). Nihonjinron can be understood as a genre of domestic Japanese self-portrayal, spanning everyday, academic, and mass-market publications. Popular works ”*assert with numbing repetition the uniqueness of Japan, constituted as the particularized obverse of the West*”.[92] Sebastian Brooke emphasized that it is important to understand how these narratives are largely rooted in historical cultural ideas and traits. They play a significant role in shaping the perception of Japanese ‘national identity’. Although Japan is not the only country that constructs its national identity through binary oppositions, its discourse places strong emphasis on the concept of the 'other' and the process of differentiation. Japanese identity is shaped by the belief in uniqueness and distinction, with outsiders being excluded from the 'we'. This notion of uniqueness is based on the myth of racial unity – the belief that all Japanese people share the same racial and ethnic background. The myth suggests that the 'Japanese race' embodies all cultural aspects of 'Japanese identity', believed to be inherited through bloodlines. In many Nihonjinron writings, this link between race, ethnicity, blood, and culture is a central theme. As a result, it is often argued that *only Japanese people* can truly understand or appreciate certain concepts about the world and humanity.[93] One peculiar aspect of Nihonjinron is that it rarely addresses Japan's relations with other non-Western countries: Japan appears surprisingly indifferent to how it is perceived by non-Western nations. By not positioning itself in relation to the non-Western world, it projects an absolute certainty about its superiority. This process, in turn, serves to mask and compensate for Japan's perceived inferiority to the West.[94] Although both Social Darwinism and Nihonjinron have been discredited in academia, the tenets of Nihonjinron still pervade Japanese society.[95] Undoubtedly, the sense of Japanese superiority, national

[92] Marilyn Ivy: *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan, University of Chicago Press*, 1995. p. 2.
[93] Sebastian Brooke: *Constructing National Identity: Japanese Narratives and Triadic Discourses*. In: ejcjs, Volume 22, Issue 3. p. 11.
[94] Koichi Iwabuchi: *Complicit exoticism: Japan and its other.* In: Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media & Culture Vol. 8, No. 2, 1994.; Iwabuchi also provides an excellent periodisation of Nihonjinron.
[95] David Huang: *Japanese Ninhonjinron and 1890s American Social Darwinism: Looking to the Past for a Solution to Japan’s Vicious Cycle of Homogeneity* https://www.bu.edu/writingprogram/journal/past-issues/issue-9/huang/ (accessed

exceptionalism, and xenophobia that developed in Japan in the 20th century has Western roots. As observed by Lim Jie-hyun, Japanese historiographical discourse dislocated Japan's past from Asia by inventing the Orient of China and Korea and simultaneously positioned Japan in the West and dislocated Japan from the East. (This invention was so successful that, in a 2003 international survey conducted by University of Tokyo professor Takashi Inoguchi, only 26 percent of Japanese respondents identified as *Asian* when asked about the broader group to which they belonged.)[96] The idea of an exceptional Japan to Asia presupposed the existence of a Japanese historical peculiarity that was close to European history. This is how Japanese exceptionalism served as the equivalent of European exceptionalism in world history.[97]

Interestingly, national exceptionalism is one of the peculiar things that allegedly connect Hungary and Japan through pseudoscientific Turanistic theories insisting that Hungarians and Japanese have a genetic or linguistic kinship. Turanism is a pseudoscientific political-ideological movement proclaiming the need for close cooperation or political unification between people who are claimed by its supporters to be culturally, linguistically or ethnically related and to have Inner and Central Asian origin, such as the Turks, Mongols, Tungus, Hungarians, Finns, Estonians, and other smaller ethnic groups, as a means of collaborating towards shared interests and opposing the cultural and political influences of the powers of Europe. It was born in the 19th century to counter the effects of pan-nationalist ideologies such as pan-Germanism and pan-Slavism.[98] In 1925, Hungarian linguist József Schmidt offered a witty critique of Turanism:

> *"rarely has a loftier, prouder eagle of thought been born from a humbler egg. [...] Turanism resembles an Aristophanesian Nephelokokkygia – a fantastical castle in the clouds, suspended in mid-air, with imagination as its architect, dilettantism as its foundation, and a structure cobbled together from stillborn ideas, unfounded and unprovable assertions, myths, and fables that stray further from reality than*

2023 March); Sherrie Cross (1996) *Prestige and Comfort: The development of Social Darwinism in early Meiji Japan, and the role of Edward Sylvester Morse*. Annals of Science, 53:4, 323-344, DOI: 10.1080/00033799608560820

[96] Japan Times Opinion – Ramesh Thakur and Inoguchi Takashi, 9 Nov. 2003.

[97] Lim Jie-hyun: *Imagining West and Self in the Global Easts: On Poland and Korea*; In.: *Western Historiography in Asia Circulation, Critique and Comparison* Edited by: Q. Edward Wang , Okamoto Michihiro and Longguo Li. DeGruyter, 2022, p. 506.

[98] Further reading on Hungarian Turanism: Balázs Ablonczy: *Go East!: A History of Hungarian Turanism* (Studies in Hungarian History) Indiana University Press, 2022; Vona Gábor: *Átokból áldás – A turanizmus üzenete a 21. században*, Vlog Influence, Budapest, 2021

Makó is from Jerusalem."[99]

Jacob Mikanowski reminds us that nearly every European country holds a pivotal moment in its distant history that serves as a symbolic origin. These speculative beginnings are typically situated in the era of barbarians, where historical records are *conveniently* scarce. In line with this pattern, France points to Clovis the Frank and their ancestors the Gauls, while the Germans commemorate Arminius, the figure who repelled the Roman legions in the Teutoburg Forest. Regarding Hungary, Mikanowski argues that

> "*The Hungarian version is only a little more extreme, although, as far as canonical history is concerned, Hungarian origins are already fairly spectacular. The early Hungarians appeared in ninth-century Europe as a collection of migrating tribes who raised hell across the continent for a century before settling down in the flatlands of the Carpathian Basin. As a result of their migration from points far to the east, Hungarians speak a language that is virtually unique in Europe. (Their closest linguistic relatives are a handful of tiny tribes living in central Russia, and they also share a distant link with the Finns.) (...) The mythology (...) posits that Hungarians, rather than being the orphans of Europe, are members of a great interethnic brotherhood, whose heroes include everyone from Attila to Tamerlane to Genghis Khan and whose territory stretches all the way from Budapest to Manchuria. Huns are this brotherhood's shared ancestors, as are Scythians, Parthians, and scores of other nomadic would-be world conquerors. Thanks to this shared inheritance, the thinking goes, one can find traces of Hungarian kinship and influence in Turkey, in Mongolia, in Azerbaijan, even in Japan.*"[100]

The main issue with the Japanese–Hungarian pseudoscientific quest for kinship is that it has little to do with science or rational inquiry. Instead, it is based on a form of religious faith intertwined with occultism, esotericism, and exoticism, and it is deeply entangled with political ideologies. Its modus operandi is to fabricate support for its ideological beliefs based on spiritual or ideological faith. In the postmodern, post-truth world, it seems that people are living in the 'society of the spectacle',[101] and they increasingly prefer captivating fantasies over history (or historical realities), no matter how far removed from reality the phantasmagorias may be. The notion of Japanese-Hungarian

[99] Schmidt József: *Turánizmus*. Nyugat, 1925. 20. szám
[100] Jacob Mikanowski: *The Call of the Drums – Hungary's far right discovers its inner barbarian*; Harper's Magazine, 2019/08 https://harpers.org/archive/2019/08/the-call-of-the-drums-hungarian-far-right/ (Accessed: 2023 Aug)
[101] Guy Debord: *La société du spectacle*. Buchet-Chastel, 1967

kinship in present-day Hungary is shaped by a distinctive background rhetoric, manifesting as a form of postmodern, autosuggestive ethno-characterology that appeals to the masses. While it might possess some literary or comical value, placing this notion on an equal footing with science is simply a glorification of pseudoscience. This poses a significant danger, as these thoughts, which may even carry an embedded racist tone, may find their way from subcultural circles into common knowledge, leading to further postmodern cognitive decline in Hungary.

While the mystical Hungarian sense of closeness to Japan felt in (mostly) alternative subcultural circles rests on ideological and ethnogenesis politics foundations rooted in the theory of Turanism, there are also collective memories that appear and disappear from time to time. These collective memories add to the positive image about Japan in a given period. Below are a few examples of the modern Hungarian collective memory (and its erosion) related to Japan. In the 19th century, Hungarian public opinion largely rejected the “yellow peril” theory, with counter-propaganda emerging in response to it. There are arguments about who should be credited with the coinage of the theory: some say that a Hungarian General, István Türr, seems to have first used the term in relation to Japan in a June 1895 article. Kaiser Wilhelm also used the term in September 1895, once again in relation to Japan. Around this time, other Western thinkers began to depict China as the ‘yellow peril’ – most notably, the racist American thinkers Charles Henry Pearson (1893), and Alfred Mahan (1897).[102] Later on, the victory of Japan in the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War sparked Hungarian national consciousness and quickly rising interest in Japan. In the 1920s, Hungarian prisoners of war returned from Japanese prison camps, bringing with them a positive attitude towards the Japanese.[103] Also, during the Trianon peace negotiations in 1920, Japanese delegates were sympathising with Hungarians, which was remembered for a while in the Hungarian political elite. Much later, in 1989, so called ‘samurai bonds’ helped finance the democratic political change in Hungary. In 1991, Hungarian Suzuki Corporation was established (by Suzuki Japan, the Hungarian Government, Itochu, and the World Bank) and since then, Suzuki cars are marketed in Hungary as "our car" (*a mi autónk*). Alongside the company’s carefully curated image, trash-art and urban folklore elevated both Suzuki and its workers to

[102] John M. Hobson: *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760–2010* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp. 108, chapter 4-6.

[103] 1914, Qingdao: after the sinking of the ship ‘Kaiserin Elizabeth’, 56 Hungarian prisoners were sent to various Japanese war camps and they returned home in around 1920; at the beginning of 1920, the number of Hungarian prisoners of war in Eastern Siberia was more than 10,000, and due to the disappearance of the Russians, the American and Japanese intervention teams ensured authority over the area of the camps

almost absurd heights in a cheesy party song *I Got Hired at Suzuki as a Worker (Felvettek a Suzukiban munkásnak)*, a music video[104] that has amassed 1.8 million YouTube views since 2008.

There are Western discursive elements that highlight closeness between Japan and the West.[105] This phenomenon can be observed in some British antonomasias and comparisons used with Japanese subjects, formed at around 1902, at the time of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance: *"Japan is The Britain of the East"*, *"Manchester of Japan"* (Osaka), *"Liverpool of Japan"* (Kobe).[106] Further examples of antonomasia can be found in 19th-century European rhetorical discourse, where Japan was described as the "*French of Asia*"[107], or the "*Greece of the Far East*".[108] In the latter example, there is an assumed Western primacy where the comparative value of Japan (as a "Far-Eastern civilization") lies in "*showing us in their present states our past states*".[109] Another antonomasia, "*The Prussians of the East*" refers to Japan's military and strategic prowess, drawing a parallel with the military might of Prussia (now part of Germany) in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The expression became prominent during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) when Japan defeated the Russian Empire, showcasing its military capabilities and solidifying its status as a rising power.[110] (In this labeling frenzy, Austria, too, had its share, being dubbed the "*China of Europe*" in 1904.)[111] Even a cursory search of online sources reveals that certain antonomasias, similar to those discussed above, are still circulating in common conversation. Examples include: "the Swedes/Germans are the Japanese of Europe", "Bulgarians are the Japanese of the Balkans", and "the Japanese are the British/Germans of Asia".

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[104] https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=GcFEG_1__-M (accessed: 2026 May)

[105] Josef Kreiner notes that the European perception of an intimate closeness between the two cultures began in the 17th–18th centuries and developed within the context of European self-awareness and self-criticism. Josef Kreiner: *A Concrete Holistic Approach to the Study of Japanese Culture: An Example of Civilization Studie*s, SENRI Ethnological Studies, 16., 1984. p. 38.

[106] Charles A. Fisher: *The Britain of the East? A Study in the Geography of Imitation* In: Modern Asian Studies Vol. 2, No. 4, Meiji Centenary Number (1968), pp. 343-376. Cambridge University Press

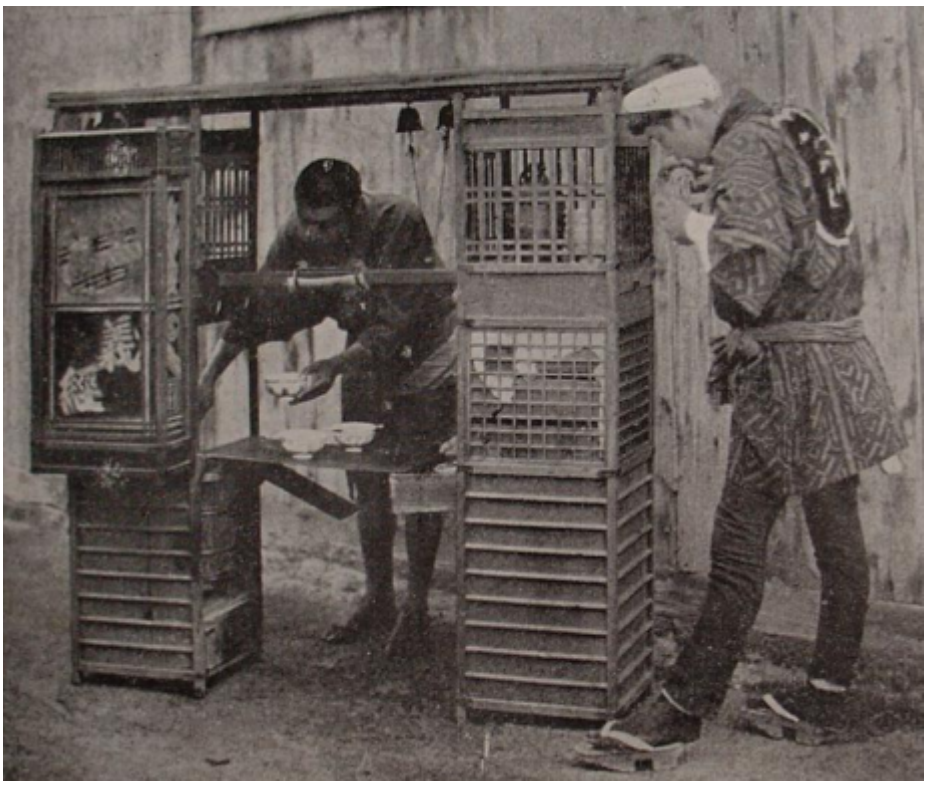
[107] Pesti Napló, 1894. Okt. 18.

[108] On the reception of Greek culture in Japan, as well as Japanese Hellenists and Hellenism in Japan, see: Michael Lucken, *Le Japon grec. Culture et possession*. Paris, Gallimard (Bibliothèque des histoires), 2019.; See also: Conrad, Sebastian: *Greek in Their Own Way: Writing India and Japan into the World History of Architecture at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*. In: American Historical Review, 125(1). 2020. pp. 19-53, doi.org/10.1093/ahr/rhz1224.

[109] Christopher Paul Bush: *Why not compare?*. In: English Language Notes. 2011 ; Vol. 49, No. 1. pp. 169-175.

[110] Sarah Panzer: *The Prussians of The East: Samurai, Bushido, and Japanese Honor In The German Imagination, 1905-1945* In: Bulletin of the German Historical Institute 58 | Spring 2016, pp. 47-71.

[111] Arthur Diósy: *The New Far East*, 1904. p. 333.



Japanese soup vendor, c. 1908 (private collection)

During the Russo-Japanese War, Russia and Japan vied for superiority, each claiming to possess more European characteristics than the other, based on competing ideas of racial and ideological kinship. The war quickly became a significant media event, captivating audiences worldwide and compelling them to align themselves with either one of the belligerents.[112] Chris Suh argues that

> "*Japan's victory over Russia punched a hole in the logic of white supremacy. There were some American missionaries and eugenicists who could not believe a nonwhite people to be capable of achieving what the Japanese did, insisting that the Japanese must be "white", yet far more commonly held was the belief that the Japanese, as a 'yellow' race, surpassed many of the 'white' races in their development. From this perspective, the Japanese exemplified how nonwhite*

[112] An intriguing paper explores the responses to the war in Vienna's public sphere in neutral Austria-Hungary. Ulrich Brandenburg: *Transnational Solidarities and Competing Visions of Europe: Vienna's Vote on the Russo-Japanese War*. In: History, 2022/107: 885-909., The Historical Association and John Wiley & Sons Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-229X.13327. The paper shows that ordinary people's voices on the war in Viennese society "*was deeply split between solidarity with Russia and with Japan, reflecting the contested socio-political situation in the city and in the Austro-Hungarian Empire as a whole. While supporters of Russia excluded Japan from a racially, religiously and geographically defined vision of Europe, supporters of Japan often envisioned a community of civilisation, freedom and justice, which excluded Russia and included Japan. Additionally, competing racisms against 'yellow' Japan and Slav Russia reveal substantial disagreement about whether Japan or Russia should be regarded as Europe's Other*".

people could climb up the human hierarchy by adapting themselves to a Western standard of "civilization", which held colonial empire-building to be the highest stage of human development. Coming to terms with this form of racial thinking is essential to reinterpreting how the US emerged as a pacific power. While the specter of the 'Yellow Peril' loomed large in American culture, American policymakers implemented various strategies to avoid confrontation with Japan."[113]

At this point, it is pertinent to briefly examine the history of early European discourse on race and its connection to Japan. As outlined by Rotem Kowner, from 1300 to 1543, during the 'Phase of Speculation', mentions of the Japanese by Europeans were so sporadic that they did not form a coherent discourse. Throughout this era, the Japanese were essentially imagined figures, with only a handful of Europeans speculating about their existence based on rumours. The discourse evolved rapidly once direct contact with the archipelago became possible. During the second period, 'Phase of Observation', we can see the first European encounters with the Japanese on their archipelago (1543–1640). This intensive phase began with the landing of Portuguese traders in Japan and the arrival of Jesuit missionaries, ending with the final expulsion of the former almost a century later. As Rotem Kowner writes:

"*Despite their different backgrounds and motives, these early visitors offered a fairly uniform perspective on the Japanese. None of them paid much attention to the locals' physical appearance, but they all described them as highly civilised, well built, and white. Often forgotten today, this colour perception lingered longer than the modern designation of the Japanese as yellow skinned. After several decades of virtual Jesuit monopoly, the discourse on the Japanese was opened to additional participants from Spain, England, and the Dutch Republic, as well as members of other religious orders, and turned into a true all-European project. (...) Under any parameter, the Japanese stood high, compared with any other newly 'discovered' peoples. Positive views of the Japanese remained firm throughout this phase, despite (...) a dramatic change in the local attitude to Christianity towards its end. (...) The Japanese high status (...) materialised in both theory and reality. Local converts were the first non-Europeans to be admitted to the Society of*

[113] Chris Suh: 'Introduction: Seeing Race beyond the Color Line', The Allure of Empire: American Encounters with Asians in the Age of Transpacific Expansion and Exclusion (New York, 2023; online edn, Oxford Academic, 18 May 2023), https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197631614.003.0001, accessed 17 Aug. 2023.

Jesus, women were regarded highly for marriage, and even slaves were coveted as the best soldiers in Asia. The Japanese standing suggests that military power and level of civilization were the main factors in establishing ethnic status and ranking in this period."[114]

In the third period, which Rotem Kowner calls the 'Phase of Reconsideration' (1640–1735), he adds:

"*Together with China, Japan remained one of the few places on earth able to defy the rising military and political power of northwestern Europe, the Netherlands and England in particular. With the shogunal regime sealing most of its ports to foreign trade, now only a handful of employees of the Dutch East India Company had access to the country and the ability to furnish fresh information about its population. But despite its geographical remoteness and the implementation of an isolationist policy from the 1630s, Japan was not an island, at least in terms of European images. The European discourse on the Japanese was far from dying. Much of it took place now with little relevance to the Japanese reality. Incredibly, like its Chinese neighbours under Qing rule, Edo Japan only magnified its capacity to exert power; but at the same time, European self-confidence and arrogance vis-à-vis other non-Europeans was reaching new heights. In the late seventeenth century, initial ideas of a new racial order seemed to germinate. No wonder that European views of the Other persistently deteriorated during this phase. Side by side, during the Phase of Reconsideration, botany and medicine began to play a major role in formulating a new paradigm of nature, and consequently also a more explicit concept of race, based on systematic taxonomy and a broader geographical understanding. In this context, Japanese power and status could delay but not prevent some early signs of a paradigm shift.*"[115]

After the end of the 'Phase of Reconsideration', a Swedish scholar, Linnaeus integrated the Japanese into a novel albeit still rudimentary universal taxonomy in the early edition of his *Naturae Systema*. His work marked a watershed in European descriptions of the Japanese and thus ended the early-modern discourse on them. In the words of Rotem Kowner:

"*The change in the discourse was subtle at first, since this Swedish scholar did not*

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[114] Rotem Kowner: *From White to Yellow: The Japanese in European Racial Thought, 1300-1735,* Series: McGill-Queen's Studies in the History of Ideas, 2014, Published by: McGill-Queen's University Press pp. 30-31.
[115] Rotem Kowner: *From White to Yellow: The Japanese in European Racial Thought, 1300-1735,* Series: McGill-Queen's Studies in the History of Ideas, 2014, Published by: McGill-Queen's University Press pp. 30-31.

herald an immediate transition in the way race was conceptualised and did not focus on a specific group. Moreover, in the subsequent 119 years that were to elapse until the forced opening of Japanese ports, the rushing stream of new information about the country, so characteristic of previous phases, subsided even further. Hereafter, the restrictions imposed by the bakufu and the fewer available reports on the country led Europeans to increasingly view the local population as peripheral and even exotic. At stake, however, was not the number of publications but their content. From here onwards, the discourse began to echo discourses on other, less-esteemed groups whose negative impact on the Japanese image was unequivocal."[116]

It was also Rotem Kowner, who presented a brilliant historiography[117] on Western perceptions of the Japanese that evolved significantly over time. Initially seen as a culturally refined but politically unthreatening people, the Japanese were often described in vague racial terms. Although, as Japan gained military power and asserted its ambitions, Western discourse shifted, portraying them as an inferior and menacing "Other". This transformation aligned with the rise of racial anthropology, which sought to classify and rank human groups based on physical traits. Early racial theorists, focused on the Caucasian-Negro dichotomy, paid little attention to East Asians. When they did, they grouped the Japanese with the broader Mongolian race, seeing them as inferior yet somewhat closer to Caucasians. A key figure in shaping these racial classifications was Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, an 18th-century German anthropologist. He introduced the five-race model, categorizing humanity into Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, and Malay groups. Blumenbach's views on race were more flexible than those of later racial anthropologists – he recognized individual variation and the influence of the environment – but his classification placed the Japanese firmly within the Mongolian group. His ideas laid the foundation for 19th-century racial anthropology, influencing later scholars who reinforced hierarchical distinctions between races. Throughout the 19th century, anthropologists used craniometry (the measurement of the size, shape, and proportions of the human skull), physiognomy (the practice or belief that a person's character, personality, or abilities can be judged from their facial features or appearance), and phrenology (a now-discredited theory that claimed mental traits and personality could

[116] Rotem Kowner: *From White to Yellow: The Japanese in European Racial Thought, 1300-1735,* Series: McGill-Queen's Studies in the History of Ideas, 2014, Published by: McGill-Queen's University Press, p. 310.
[117] Rotem Kowner: '*Lighter Than Yellow, But Not Enough': Western Discourse On The Japanese 'Race'*, 1854–1904. The Historical Journal. 2000;43(1). pp. 103-131. doi:10.1017/S0018246X9900895X

be determined by examining the shape and bumps of the skull) to justify these racial hierarchies, often describing the Japanese as childlike, with neotenous features (the retention of juvenile traits into adulthood) that implied inferiority. Rotem Kowner distinguishes three distinct groups that shaped Western discourse on Japan. *Specialists* – academics, diplomats, and missionaries – offered detailed, informed perspectives but were often constrained by disciplinary biases. *Impressionists* – travelers and journalists – relied on personal experiences, producing vivid but inconsistent narratives. *Ideologues* – politicians, propagandists, and racists – instrumentalized Japan to support their agendas, whether as a model for modernization or a racial threat.[118] Japan's rise as a modern state complicated these views. Initially, it was favorably contrasted with China, which was widely despised in the West. Some even speculated on a link between the Japanese and Jews, suggesting an affinity with Western civilization. However, Japan's hostility toward Westerners and limited commercial success in the 1860s led to skepticism, associating the Japanese more closely with other Mongoloid peoples. A recurring pattern emerged: whenever China was viewed negatively, Japan was seen more favorably, and vice versa – an oscillation that would continue even after World War II. During the late 19th century, Japan was granted a form of "racial moratorium", a temporary suspension of full racial categorization. Western observers hesitated to impose a fixed racial status on the Japanese, waiting to see whether they would fully adopt Western civilization. This conditional whiteness meant that as long as Japan aligned with Western norms, it could enjoy a degree of racial acceptance. The work of Erwin Baelz, a German physician and anthropologist who lived in Japan for decades, was particularly influential in shaping Western racial views of the Japanese. While he rejected extreme racial hierarchies, his studies still placed the Japanese within the broader "Mongoloid" category, reinforcing their perceived distinctiveness from Westerners. His observations, widely cited by contemporaries, contributed to both the admiration and suspicion toward Japan in the West.

Drawing on critical race theory, Hungary and Japan share experiences of navigating ambiguous racial positions. In this framework, the similarities between Hungarians and Japanese can be understood through the concepts of "dirty whiteness" and "honorary whiteness". Literature shows that racial classification systems in the global 'core' have racially categorized Eastern Europe in ambiguous and contradictory ways,

[118] Rotem Kowner: '*Lighter Than Yellow, But Not Enough': Western Discourse On The Japanese 'Race'*, 1854–1904. The Historical Journal. 2000;43(1). pp. 105-129. doi:10.1017/S0018246X9900895X

often describing it as "white but not quite".[119] This concept, also referred to as "conditional whiteness", "liminal whiteness", or "off white", highlights Eastern Europe's complex racial position.[120] (Needless to say, Eastern Europe is not merely a victim of external racial ideologies; claims to whiteness, although only conditionally accepted in the West, played a crucial role in the development of the region's nation-states.) Hungarians, though racially categorized as white, have often been marginalized as "dirty whites"[121] due to their peripheral status within Western European racial hierarchies. This reflects a perception of inferiority compared to Western Europeans. Conversely, the Japanese have been historically labeled as "honorary whites",[122] particularly in places like apartheid South Africa, where economic and diplomatic considerations granted them proximity to whiteness. Though the label provided some benefits, it was still deeply embedded in the racial hierarchy of apartheid and was not intended to challenge the system's fundamental racial divisions.

As described in Subodhana Wijeyeratne's work, the Russo-Japanese War had a profound global impact, particularly in Japan, where some intellectuals viewed it as a race war challenging prevailing racial hierarchies. While racial interpretations of the conflict existed in the West, Japanese intellectuals uniquely saw the war as a revolutionary moment, undermining the social Darwinist belief in the inherent superiority of certain races, such as Anglo-Saxons and Germanic peoples. Wijeyeratne highlights that Japanese racial theorists accepted the era's widely held belief that race, people, and state were inseparable and that international conflicts were driven by racial competition rooted in Darwinian principles. They used these ideas to critique Western racial hierarchies, arguing that the Japanese were not inferior to white races, but, in some respects, superior.[123] Since the Russo-Japanese War, Japanese society has exhibited a fetishization of whiteness, reflected in advertising, fashion, and popular culture. Until the 1990s, Japanese makeup ads predominantly featured white women, and white models

[119] Following the EU's expansion into Eastern Europe between 2004 and 2013, many Eastern Europeans experienced what scholars describe as "contingent", "liminal", or "ambiguous" whiteness. Factors such as language, accent, and appearance led to their racialization in Western Europe as "not quite white". Catherine Baker, Bogdan C. Iacob, Anikó Imre, James Mark (eds.): *Off white. Central and Eastern Europe and the global history of race*. Manchester University Press 2024. p. 12.

[120] Catherine Baker, Bogdan C. Iacob, Anikó Imre, James Mark (eds.): *Off white. Central and Eastern Europe and the global history of race*. Manchester University Press 2024. pp. 1-2.

[121] József Böröcz: *"Eurowhite" Conceit, "Dirty White" Ressentiment: "Race" in Europe*. Sociological Forum, Volume 36, Issue 4. pp. 1116-1134. https://doi.org/10.1111/socf.12752

[122] Brian Victoria: *Japan: Trials and Tribulations of a Land of "Honorary Whites"* 02/07/2022 https://countercurrents.org/2022/07/japan-trials-and-tribulations-of-a-land-of-honorary-whites/

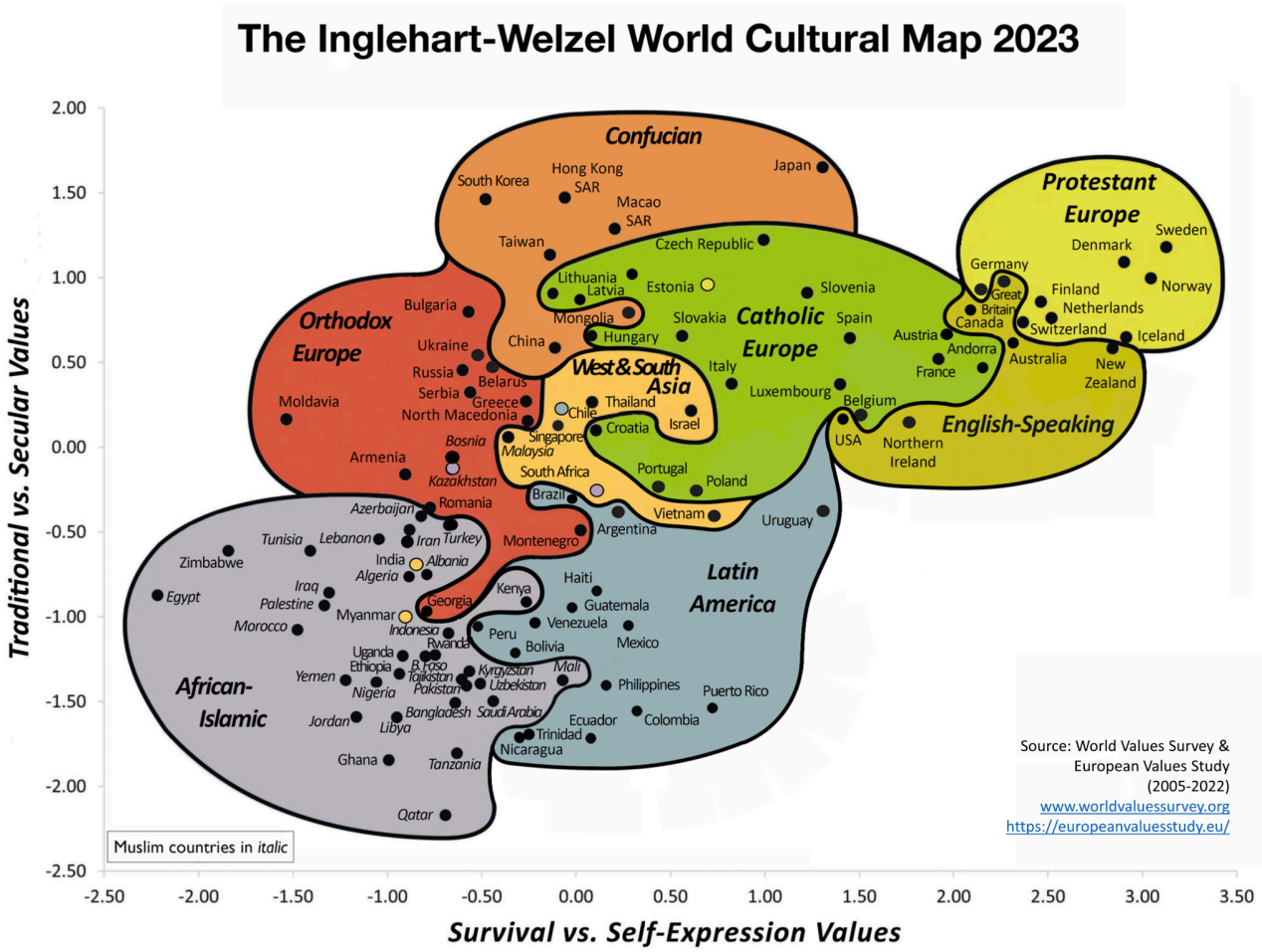
[123] Subodhana Wijeyeratne: *A Race to War: Japanese Public Intellectuals and Racial Explanations of the Russo-Japanese War* In: The Asia-Pacific Journal, Volume 18, Issue 19, Number 4, Article ID 5495, Oct 01, 2020; p. 2.

still dominate fashion shows. Wedding brochures often showcased interracial couples with white partners but rarely those with darker-skinned individuals. The racial preference is also reflected in manga, where ostensibly "stateless" characters often resemble Europeans. This reflects the enduring notion that the Japanese are culturally, politically, and biologically closer to whites, a belief still evident in contemporary Japanese society.[124]

The Value of Japan

Major global surveys reveal a close relationship between Japan and Europe. For example, the Inglehart-Welzel cultural map (World Value Survey data made by political scientists Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel) represents empirical evidence of massive cultural change and the persistence of distinctive cultural traditions. The main thesis holds that socioeconomic development is linked with a broad syndrome of distinctive value orientations. Analysis asserts that there are two major dimensions of cross-cultural variation in the world: 1.) Traditional values versus Secular-rational values and 2.) Survival values versus Self-expression values. If we take a look at the map, it is clear that Japan is close to Europe (especially: Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, and the Czech Republic) in Secular-rational and Self-expression values.

[124] Subodhana Wijeyeratne: *A Race to War: Japanese Public Intellectuals and Racial Explanations of the Russo-Japanese War* In: The Asia-Pacific Journal, Volume 18, Issue 19, Number 4, Article ID 5495, Oct 01, 2020; p. 13.



It looks like there is an overall positive perception of Japan in the world, and it can be seen in another survey that measures the so-called "nation brands" – the Anholt-Ipsos Nation Brands Index (NBI), an annual study that has been conducted since 2008 to gather perceptions of countries around the world. In its 2022 edition, Japan ranked second for the first time since 2018, achieving strong reputational scores on the Exports, Tourism, and Culture indices.[125] (In contrast, Hungary ranked 32nd on the list, landing between Mexico and China.)

In the 19th century, travelogues served as a peephole into the world of the Other, emerging as one of the most popular ways to represent and introduce the Other to the reader (and to compare it with the Self). Travelogues published in the Hungarian Kingdom in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at the turn of the 19th and 20th century frequently praised one particular trait of the Japanese: their “exceptional cleanliness” (the cleanliness of the human body and the environment). This trait was widely admired by

[125] https://www.ipsos.com/en/nation-brands-index-2022; Further reading on the ‘Japan Brand’: Michal Daliot-Bul: *Japan Brand Strategy: The Taming of ‘Cool Japan’ and the Challenges of Cultural Planning in a Postmodern Age*. Social Science Japan Journal Vol. 12, No. 2, pp 247–266. 2009. doi:10.1093/ssjj/jyp037

other foreign visitors to the country, contributing to Japan's favourable reputation in the early modern times. Cleanness was regarded as a symbol of progress, of rising within the global cultural hierarchy, and of one's place in that hierarchy, due to the fact that the profound transformation of hygiene culture began at the end of the 19th century, thanks to the research conducted by chemist Louis Pasteur.[126] The revelation that numerous diseases stem from microscopic living entities called bacteria came to light and this breakthrough bore profound implications for humanity's well-being and everyday existence. One significant shift was in personal hygiene practices: the act of cleaning oneself with water and soap, previously met with disapproval, particularly among the more affluent segments of society, swiftly gained immense popularity. The cleanliness of the Japanese continues to be a highly regarded trait even in our present times. For example, we can observe this in the memetization of Japanese fans at the 2022 Soccer World Cup in Qatar: numerous media sources and social media contents praised the Japanese fans for conscientiously picking up trash after themselves in the stadiums. The memetization of Japan is highlighted by a widely-circulated media article from 2012, which stated that Japan "*is practically a meme in the West. The Japanese are insane. But, you know, lovably insane*".[127] Such meme-stories about the "weirdness" of the Japanese are summed up by a British commentator in 2019: "*The message of all such stories is: these guys are unbelievably weird. And, when combined with the economic stories, the message is: these guys are unbelievably weird and very frightening.*"[128] For quite some time, Japan has been perceived in the Western world as a traditional society steeped in the imagery of geisha and samurai. This perception gradually merged with symbols of technological and economic advancement, redefining the country's image. In contemporary recurring narratives, the fusion of these two aspects – the traditional, which invariably signifies Japan, and the modern, which typically represents the West – creates a synthesized duality. This hybridity is believed to define the 'uniqueness of the Japanese style', where the supposed 'uniqueness' itself becomes one of the key abstract features of 'Japaneseness'. Although the rhetoric emphasizes a unique duality, the final image presents Japan's timeless traditional past coexisting with the modern West.[129] These two

[126] Kapitány Ágnes – Kapitány Gábor: *Néhány gondolat a tisztaság szimbolikájáról*; a written version of a conference panel http://real.mtak.hu/17583/21/tisztasag_szimbolikaja.pdf (accessed: 2023 Aug)
[127] Davis, S. P., M., M., & Yosomono, E. (2012, December 6). 6 *WTF Japanese Trends (You Can Blame on White Guys)*. Retrieved in 2023 Aug, from http://www.cracked.com/article_19098_6-wtf-japanese-trends-you-can-blame-white-guys.htm
[128] Bryan Appleyard: *A Smell-Free Never-Never Land*, The Independent, 13 April 2019.
[129] Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni: *The Making and Marking of The 'Japanese' and the 'Western' in Japanese Contemporary*

distinct viewpoints regarding Japan can be categorised as *traditional orientalism* and *techno-orientalism*. Nonetheless, an additional perspective has emerged in the popular discourse and media of the West, portraying Japan as unconventional. This new approach can be identified as a variant of orientalism, referred to as "*wacky orientalism*".[130] Within this framework, Japan is portrayed as a dysfunctional or dystopic version of modernity, or the 'West'. Toshio Miyake compiled a list of common themes in this modern Orientalism, which include the reification of mankind into machines (robots, cyborgs), urban or generational alienation (hikikomori, suicides), ritualized groupism and conformity to corporatism (salarymen), ultraviolent individualism (yakuza), cyber-apocalyptic religious terrorism (Aum Shinrikyō), capitalistic precariarization of apathetic youth (freeter), infantile consumerism and perverse entertainment (kawaii, hentai), racism against ethnic minorities (right-wing nationalism), and the devastating effects of science, technology, and industrialization (Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Fukushima).[131] When looking at a foreign nation, encountering aspects that seem unfamiliar is a natural response; this contrast between one's own country and another creates a sense of distinctiveness. In the case of Japan, this divergence extends even further. Japan has limited influence over the narrative crafted by Western Orientalistic discourses, and altering this perception remains a challenging endeavour. If altering it is even a goal, given that the Japanese government is more than willing to nurture and endorse Orientalistic discourses through self-Orientalism. Toshio Miyake aptly describes three prototypes of Western Orientalists, and the way they configure Japan as a *symbol of something*. For the *nostalgic Orientalist*, the 'real spirit' of Japan is grounded in tradition as the only guarantee of an idealised harmony. For the *paternalistic Orientalists*, Japan offers an opportunity to judge the intrinsic limits of its modernity in terms of rationality, individualism, and democracy. Meanwhile, *postmodern Orientalists* delve into a spectacularized version of Japan, often nurturing cyberpunk and apocalyptic fantasies. Such present Orientalistic discourses about Japan are effectively inducing fascination for Japan as a cultural paradox or oxymoron (by adding/mixing hyper-tradition to/with hyper-modernity).[132]

Material Culture. Journal of Material Culture 2001/6. p. 70. DOI: 10.1177/135918350100600104

[130] Wester Wagenaar: *Wacky Japan: A new face of orientalism.* In: Asia in Focus – A Nordic Journal on Asia By Early Career Researchers, 2017/07. pp. 46-51. https://asiainfocus.dk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/wacky-japan.pdf (accessed: 2023 Aug.)

[131] Toshio Miyake: *Towards Critical Occidentalism Studies Re-inventing the 'West' and 'Japan' in Mangaesque Popular Cultures*. In: Ca' Foscari Japanese Studies 3 – Contemporary Japan Challenges for a World Economic Power in Transition edited by Paolo Calvetti, Marcella Mariotti, 2015, p. 99.

[132] Toshio Miyake: *Towards Critical Occidentalism Studies Re-inventing the 'West' and 'Japan' in Mangaesque Popular*

At the end of the 19th century, the trend of Japonism(e), the widespread fascination with Japanese art and culture that emerged at that time, also contributed to the formation of a positive image of Japan in the world. If we were to describe what Japonism(e) really means from a postcolonial viewpoint, we can say the following: Japonism(e) is the process or phenomenon whereby the Western/peripheral ego appropriates Japan's cultural elements, objects, techniques, and concepts. These are often utilized in a weak, shallow, and detached manner, taken out of their original context and used ad-hoc. This involves stylization and enjoyment as well as exploitation, meticulous imitation and copying, sometimes resulting in imitations that seem more authentic than the originals. The Western/peripheral ego cheerfully entertains itself on an imaginary stage, assuming and portraying Japanese roles. Nevertheless, Japan and the Japanese themselves play no genuine, active part in this seemingly extravagant but actually superficial spectacle (unfortunately, when they do play a role in it, they inadvertently reinforce Western stereotypes through 'self-orientalization'). Most of the time, they – along with the cultural elements originally associated with them – serve merely as colourful backdrops for this cheap ego trip. The sole purpose of this Western/peripheral activity is a fundamentally self-centred, suspiciously exotic, light-hearted form of entertainment and exhibitionism. Throughout this process, the intention is never to truly understand Japan, the Japanese people, or the connected objects and concepts behind them on a deeper level, nor to meaningfully explore them. Instead, this process reveals Western/peripheral self-esteem issues, where the Western/peripheral Self is struggling with some form of crisis, and the exploitation of business opportunities through Euro-centric Orientalism. Turning to the 19th century, Oscar Wilde, the *Apostle of Aestheticism*, captured the essence of early European Japonism(e) in his distinctive style in "*The Decay of Lying: An Observation*" in 1889:

> "*No great artist ever sees things as they really are. If he did, he would cease to be an artist… do you really imagine that the Japanese people as they are presented to us in art have any existence? If you do, you have never understood Japanese art at all. They are the deliberate self conscious creation of certain individual artists. If you see a picture by any of the great native painters beside a real Japanese gentleman or lady, you will see there is not the slightest resemblance between them. The actual people of Japan are not unlike the general run of*

Cultures. In: Ca' Foscari Japanese Studies 3 – Contemporary Japan Challenges for a World Economic Power in Transition edited by Paolo Calvetti, Marcella Mariotti, 2015, pp. 99-100.

English, that is to say, they are extremely commonplace and have nothing curious or extraordinary about them. In fact the whole of Japan is a pure invention. There is no such country, there are no such people. One of our most charming painters went recently to the Land of the Chrysanthemum in the foolish hope of seeing the Japanese. All he saw, all he had the chance of painting, were a few lanterns and some fans. He was quite unable to discover the inhabitants (...). He did not know that the Japanese people are, as I have said, simply a mode of style, an exquisite fancy of art. And so, if you desire to see a Japanese effect, you will not behave like a tourist and go to Tokio. On the contrary, you will stay at home and steep yourself in the work of certain Japanese artists, and then, when you have absorbed the spirit of their style, and caught their imaginative manner of vision, you will go some afternoon and sit in the Park or stroll down Piccadilly, and if you cannot see an absolutely Japanese effect there, you will not see it anywhere."[133]

The wave of Japonism(e) was enhanced at the World Exhibitions at the end of the 19th century, and this phenomenon brought with it an early version of country branding, when the Meiji government deliberately made its first systematic efforts to promote a distinctive and often self-exoticizing image abroad.[134] Not surprisingly, contemporary Japan-related events in the global stage sponsored by the Japanese Embassy or other governmental agencies are also responsible for creating an appealing and also often self-stereotyped image of "Japaneseness" (of Japanese cultural values, such as: peace, harmony, tranquillity and love of nature) through the expansion of cultural exports of traditional Japanese arts and crafts. These stereotyped images have been regarded by the Japanese government as valuable resources of soft power. Through those images, they can control and influence the institutionalised national and international discourse. It is abundantly clear that political ideologies, historical constructs, and cultural representations are closely intertwined within this centrally funded cultural promotion activity.[135]

If we examine the historical perceptions and reminiscences about Japan in Hungary at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, we can identify several thematic

[133] Oscar Wilde: The Decay of Lying (1889). p. 927.
[134] Liliana Morais: *Traditional Japanese Arts and Crafts Historical and Political Trajectories from the Meiji Period until Today.* Journal of International and Advanced Japanese Studies Vol. 11, March 2019, pp. 139-146.
[135] Liliana Morais: *Traditional Japanese Arts and Crafts Historical and Political Trajectories from the Meiji Period until Today.* Journal of International and Advanced Japanese Studies Vol. 11, March 2019, pp. 139-146. Further reading on soft power campaigns: Katja Valaskivi (2013) *A brand new future? Cool Japan and the social imaginary of the branded nation*, Japan Forum, 25:4, 485-504, DOI: 10.1080/09555803.2012.756538

categories under the narrative umbrella of "*Japan, regarded as (a source of) X*". In some cases, Japan was regarded as an exotic *spectacle*, especially during the early stages of contact. Starting from the late 1860s, Japanese acrobat troupes visited the Kingdom of Hungary, and the 1873 World Fair in Vienna cast a spotlight on Japan within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.[136] Later, the appearance of Japan-related theatrical plays (dramas, operettas, operettos) marked the spread of *theatrical romanticism* at the beginning of the 20th century. Concurrently, Japan-themed couplet songs offered audiences a sense of *frivolous humour and light entertainment*. The increasing availability of cheap Japanese knick-knacks painted the picture of Japan as the *source of commercial consumer goods*. Alongside these affordable Japanese curiosities, a distinct high-society market emerged for various highly-priced Japanese artefacts, and owning these objects became a *status symbol* in society. Lastly, there was always a lingering *opportunity for flirtation*, especially within the circles of male travellers privileged enough to journey to Japan, who engaged in intimate relationships with underprivileged and unfortunate, 'easily accessible' Japanese girls through the system of 'temporary marriage' in Fin de siècle Japan.[137]

Japanese child, c. 1908. (private collection)

[136] The delusion of exoticism in Hungary during the second half of the 19th century was not confined to Japan. For Central Europeans, the vast distances and centuries of separation turned Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and even remote Iceland into a mythic land – exotic, unknown, yet intriguingly familiar through its Germanic roots. See: Csúr Gábor Attila: *Az Észak-jelenség : A skandináv egzotikum mítosza a Nyugat folyóirat képzetalkotásában.* In: Irodalomtörténet, 2018. 99 (4)., p. 426.

[137] Arthur Groos: *Introduction: "Marriage… in the Japanese Way"* https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009250696.002 Published online by Cambridge University Press 2023 (accessed: 2023 Aug.)

The elevation of Japan as a highly valued entity in Hungary is heavily influenced by contemporary consumer-, like-, and fandom culture. During the last years of Goulash communism (1980-1989), widely televised *Chinese kung-fu movies* and *The Shogun* series triggered a revitalised interest in Japan and a significant karate boom in Hungary. Subsequently, during and right after the above period, Japanese products such as cars, watches, cameras, fishing gear, audio/hi-fi equipment (especially the walkman), Japanese literature, as well as pop culture products, video games inundated the Hungarian market.[138] (Even Japanese management systems and corporate culture were extensively studied and emulated in Europe and Hungary.) These items served as 'gateway drugs' to a culture of 'consumeristic Japan-worship', as using these increasingly available everyday objects helped form a positive connection with Japanese culture. Through the consumption of cultural commodities, the flow of contemporary Japanese culture has fostered new perceptions of Japan, emphasizing its role as a cultural power rather than solely an economic or industrial one. The concept of Japan has, in a way, evolved into a joyous, immensely gratifying, consumer-centric, imaginary *Land of the Rising Fun*.[139] As mentioned earlier, government-led soft power campaigns effectively promoted a prevailing, homogenised positive attitude towards ‘things Japanese’, conditioning foreigners to develop an affection for Japan and to suppress any form of criticism.[140] This represents one of the most adept manipulations of Japanese soft power. Additionally, there is a perpetual narrative being widely used in Japan, regarding foreign countries that are labelled as “*pro-Japanese*”. This narrative, which was once an internally-focused Japanese construct, has evolved into an externally employed narrative element, extending beyond Japan's borders. For instance, even Taiwan, which was a Japanese colony during World War II, is known for its prominent pro-Japanese sentiments. (This can be traced back to the late 1990s, when the lifting of the ban on

[138] A similar transition began as early as in 1970s France with the introduction of Japanese animated shows on French television. It seems that several European broadcasters purchased Japanese animations originally made for the domestic Japanese market and intended for adults but aired them for children. This mismatch, partly due to the violent and sexualized content of some animations, led to legal bans or censorship of certain series/episodes.

[139] Globalization appears to have transformed the Japanese Other into a tool for J-Pop fans to cultivate a playful sense of identity. In a survey conducted between 2004 and 2005 among undergraduate university students in Hong Kong, Bangkok, and Seoul, Japanese music, television dramas, and anime were consistently described as creative, interesting, funny, high-quality, artistically stimulating, and unique. A similar survey conducted between 2006 and 2007 in France, Italy, Germany, and Switzerland, involving 1,200 manga fans, described Japan as exciting, cool, fun, and enthralling. Nissim Otmazgin: *Meta-narratives of Japanese Popular Culture and of Japan in Different Regional Contexts: Perspectives from East Asia, Western Europe, and the Middle East*. Regioninės studijos, 2013. pp. 86-92.

[140] Debitou Arudou: *Do Japan a favor: Don't stop being a critic.* Japan Times, Dec 11, 2012. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/community/2012/12/11/issues/do-japan-a-favor-dont-stop-being-a-critic/ (accessed 2023 Aug)

Japanese cultural products resulted in a surge in the consumption of Japanese TV dramas and other aspects of Japanese popular culture.) Official representatives of various countries based in Japan now draw on this narrative element when referring to their own nations, both in Japanese and in their respective linguistic contexts.[141]

Japan as a trigger for postmodern ideological and human rights activism

In the postmodern world, where ideologically coloured activism thrives due to the deconstruction and rethinking of power relations, and changing attitudes towards human-nature relations, Japan is likely to ignite certain heated discourses. Two particular triggering subjects are the Japanese dolphin-, and whale hunting practices,[142] and the issue of dumping Fukushima wastewater into the ocean. These issues are picked up by radical environmental protection organisations (radical eco-activists).[143] Woke, BIPOC activists might also feel triggered by various forms of identity tourism, cultural microaggressions and cultural appropriation.[144] At the same time, Japanese pop culture

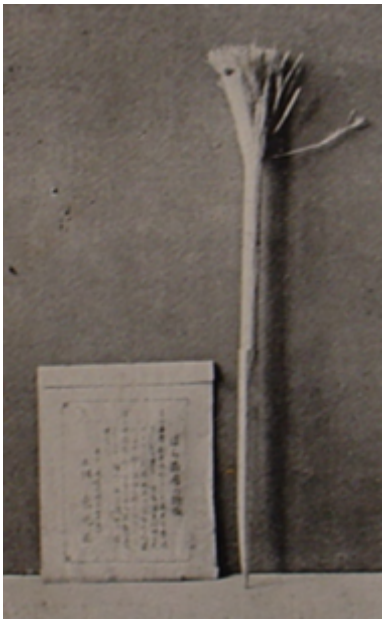
[141] Thanks for the Hungarian linguist and Japanese Studies scholar, András Albeker, who pointed out the importance and the relevance of the Japanese 親日国-discourses. Even the romanized version of the word ("shinnichi") is slowly becoming a part of Western vocabulary. Further reading: a detailed 2021 report of 10 countries that are most sympathetic towards Japan https://www.auncon.co.jp/press/release/2021-04-27/ (accessed: 2023 Aug.)

[142] Michal Kolmaš: *Why is Japan shamed for whaling more than Norway?* International Society and its barbaric others, International Relations of the Asia-Pacific, Volume 22, Issue 2, May 2022, Pages 267–296, https://doi.org/10.1093/irap/lcab012

[143] https://www.seashepherdglobal.org/latest-news/japanese-whaling/ (accessed: 2023 Aug.). As for the Fukushima wastewater release, the International Atomic Energy Agency stated in a report that Japan's approach and activities to discharge the treated water were consistent with relevant international safety standards. Furthermore, the controlled, gradual discharges of the treated water would have a negligible radiological impact on people and the environment. https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/iaea_comprehensive_alps_report.pdf (accessed: 2023 Aug.)

[144] In November 2013, Katy Perry's performance at the American Music Awards, where she wore a kimono-inspired outfit and performed with a geisha theme, sparked backlash. Critics accused her of cultural appropriation, arguing that it perpetuated stereotypes of Asian women and trivialized Japanese culture. Perry defended the performance, claiming it was inspired by her admiration for Japan and its culture. Elisheva Perelman: *The Appropriated Geisha: Using Their Role to Discuss Japanese History, Cultural Appropriation, and Orientalism.* College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University, Teaching Resources Essay 2015 http://aas2.asian-studies.org/EAA/EAA-Archives/20/3/1389.pdf (accessed: 2025 Jan.); Another noteworthy case was the Kimono Wednesday Protest in 2015, Boston. https://raceinartwriting.digitalscholarship.brown.edu/institutions-funding-and-diversity/case-study-kimono-wednesdays-at-the-boston-mfa/ (accessed: 2023 Aug). Another case from Germany: in 2023, 17 retired women from Mannheim wanted to dress up as Japanese geishas for a dance performance, and the German Antidiskriminierungsstelle (Anti-discrimination Office) banned their performance, stating that they offend intercultural sensitivity with their performance. Eventually the group were allowed to perform in their own 'kimono-like' garments, but without their black wigs.
https://www.suedkurier.de/baden-wuerttemberg/awo-ballett-darf-auf-buga-auftreten-raetseln-aber-haben-nur-fremdwoerter-benutzt;art417930,11540388 (accessed: 2023 Aug.); An opinion regarding the criticism of cultural appropriation holds that it often comes across to people, whether white or otherwise, as cultural 'policing' – a form of penalization by a (white) majority for disenfranchising other (non-white) populations. However, this policing does not come into play when appropriation occurs *between people of color*. Lilian Min: *What the Cultural Appropriation Conversation Leaves Out About Asians*. Complex.com June 7 2016.
https://www.complex.com/life/a/lilian-min/asian-identities-cultural-appropriation (accessed: 2025 Jan.)

provides safe space for postmodern LGBTQ+ and gender activists. Parallel to these, human rights watchdogs emphasise that Japan lacks laws prohibiting racial, ethnic, or religious discrimination, as well as discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Furthermore, Japan does not possess a national human rights institution.[145]



Japanese dental powder and wooden toothbrush, c. 1908 (private collection)

After discussing the interplay between local and global phenomena using a macro-lens approach, we should turn our investigation towards the individuals behind these processes, employing a micro-lens approach. We will explore the relationship between the Western/semi-peripheral ego and Japanophilia (Japanolatry, Japan-mania, Japanthusiasm, or Japan-fetishism). The American writer and journalist Roland Kelts defines Japanophilia as the "*outsiders' infatuation with Japan's cultural character*".[146] Japanophiles are striving to embrace the Japanese identity as their own. For them, the imagined "pseudo-Japan" seems to be more fascinating than ever before and its cultural produce is considered superior. Many Japanophiles dream about living in Japan, having a Japanese partner[147] or at least about a 'pilgrimage' to Akihabara in Tokyo, the Mecca of Japanese popular culture,[148] and the majority of them consume Japanese culture without

[145] https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/japan (accessed: 2023 Aug.)
[146] Roland Kelts: *Japanamerica: How Japanese Pop Culture Has Invaded the U.S.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006
[147] Available statistics show that among the drivers of Central-Eastern European migration to Japan, there are patterns of women entertainers and marriage migrants. Drnovšek Zorko, Š., Debnár, M. *Comparing the racialization of Central-East European migrants in Japan and the UK*. CMS 9, 30 (2021). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-021-00239-z
[148] Marcel Koníček: *Japanophilia: Becoming the Other.* In: Theory and Practice in English Studies Volume 8, No. 2, 2019, Masaryk University, pp. 107-117.

any ambition to unearth the cultural backgrounds, without using the newly discovered culture as a basis from which to view their own culture, and without using the new culture to construct for themselves a more nuanced self-identity.[149]

Historically speaking, European Japanophilia can be seen as a spin-off of Sinophilia. There is a theory that Western views of China have traditionally been divided into two periods: an early phase of 'Sinophilia' (17th-18th centuries) and a later phase of 'Sinophobia' (19th-20th centuries). The shift occurred in the late 18th century, particularly in Germany, where favorable views from thinkers like Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Christian Wolff were replaced by critical perspectives from Immanuel Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, and Johann Gottfried Herder. As recent studies have shown, the earliest positive images of China – from Marco Polo to 18th-century Chinoiseries[150] – cannot be fully explained by colonialism alone, as negative views had already emerged before the 19th century. On the other hand, 19th-century Sinophobia, which promoted European superiority and criticized China, was challenged by scholars who demonstrated how Chinese thought influenced European progress. The newest approach offers a more nuanced understanding, dividing Western perceptions of China into three stages: ‘Similarity’, ‘Subalternity’, and ‘Alterity’, rather than relying on the oversimplified Sinophile-Sinophobe dichotomy.[151]

Japan Days

We should not exclude the international tradition of hosting so-called 'Japan Days' from our investigation. This tradition is flourishing all over Hungary, where some major cities hold their own dedicated Japan day once a year. When we scrutinise these events critically, we encounter a perplexing mixture of ‘spiritual wellness experience packages’ being offered to the average person in the semi-periphery. These experiences are often taken out of context, stripped of their original environment, and haphazardly crammed

[149] Thorsten Botz-Bornstein: *Japanophilia in Kuwait: How far does International Culture Penetrate?* In: S. Holland and K. Spracklen (eds.), Alternativity and Marginalisation: Essays on Subcultures, Bodies and Spaces. Bingley, UK: Emerald, 2018, pp. 43–60.

[150] Chinoiserie refers to a European artistic and decorative style that emerged in the 17th and 18th centuries, characterized by the imitation and adaptation of Chinese motifs, designs, and themes. Chinoiserie was seen in various forms, including furniture, ceramics, textiles, wallpaper, and architecture. Typical features include intricate patterns, depictions of pagodas, dragons, Chinese landscapes, and figures in traditional Chinese attire. These elements were often romanticized and stylized to fit European tastes.

[151] Jean-Yves Heurtebise: *Green Orientalism, Brown Occidentalism and Chinese Ecological Civilization: Deconstructing the Culturalization of the Anthropocene to Nurture Transcultural Environmentalism.* Asian Studies XI (XXVII), 2 (2023), pp. 134-136. DOI: 10.4312/as.2023.11.2.119-148

into sports halls and post-Soviet community centres. The Japan Days are primarily organised by a small group known as the Hungary–Japan Friendship Association (Magyar-Japán Baráti Társaság), working in close cooperation with various satellite units. These events tend to feature an extreme 'anything-related-to-Japan-no-matter-how-niche' approach in their workshop specialisations and activities. As exposure to Japan-related traditional cultural products increases, consumers will inevitably perceive these workshop activities as *less unique* over time. Consequently, businesses centered on practices such as martial arts or tea ceremonies may also decline over time. To counter diminishing interest and purchasing intentions in the 'overused' areas of Japanese traditional culture, newly discovered cultural elements must be introduced. This illustrates how the insatiable demand for constant Japanese 'traditional novelty' drives the need for a continuous influx of new offerings.[152] Needless to say, business-minded individuals can even make a good living catering to this demand. But, even with a gracious and permissive goodwill approach, the phenomena of such out-of-context, chaotic, and kaleidoscopically fuzzy Japan days can only be perceived as ‘modern Capernaums of Japan-consumption' or 'Japan-consumption spectacles', perpetuating Japanese stereotypes and promoting the superficial commodification of Japan, along with a haphazard consumption of 'things Japanese'. Japan Days are predominantly attended and organised by Hungarians with a noticeable increase of native Japanese attendees and performers as well. Given the intriguing phenomenon of non-Japanese individuals performing traditional Japanese arts during these events, a more in-depth examination of this aspect is needed. From around the 2000s, an increasing number of Westerner non-Japanese (from hereby: WNJ) individuals have been engaging in traditional Japanese arts, crafts, and sports. Enthusiasts from overseas are eager to acquire craft-related skills from various parts of Japan, sometimes pursuing studies under the direct or indirect guidance of a Japanese Living National Treasure. This trend highlights the globalisation and the ‘cultural franchising’ or ‘semi-consciously outsourced’ Japanese national cultural heritage, facilitated by WNJ apprentices. In a globalised world, local, only Japanese-speaking, and often elderly Living National Treasures and their schools are struggling to establish an active market presence by themselves (they even face challenges in attracting young Japanese apprentices and selling their products within Japan). This situation makes it difficult for them to establish a self-brand on the international stage. Conversely, a group

[152] Japan-related new workshop trends appearing after the Covid period in Hungary on Japan-days: kazarihimo, kumiko, koinobori, geisha-hairstyle, karuta, manga-drawing, furoshiki workshops

of internationally attuned WNJ individuals has recognized the business opportunities that Japan-related traditional arts and crafts can offer. In this process, mostly initiated by WNJ actors, the culture of the 'Other' (in this case: an internationally highly valued Japanese culture) as well as the 'cultural difference' itself became a *highly saleable commodity* in contemporary Western society, and they are being re-promoted as global products.[153] This awareness has led to a rise in the number of opportunistic WNJ actors (including artists, performers, players, 'masters', and owners) across various 'traditional' Japanese arts, crafts, sports and other cultural activities. These encompass a diverse range.[154] Commonly referred to as cultural brokers, these WNJ individuals may unconsciously disrupt the well-indoctrinated and deeply rooted Japanese national chauvinism and ethnocentric narratives about 'unique, traditional, authentic Japanese cultural elements', due to the fact that these narratives often assert that Japanese sensitivity to aesthetic refinement *surpasses* that of other nations. This disruption is particularly noticeable among those self-made WNJ 'inverse cultural ambassadors' who are active within Japan. Already, certain tensions are emerging, particularly in the gastro, lacquerware and ceramics industries. Japanese food seems to be probably the first aspect of Japanese culture that has "*slipped out of the national cultural orbit"*.[155] In response to these trends, the Japanese government established the Organisation To Promote Japanese Restaurants Abroad (often derided as "sushi police"). Subsequently, they successfully advocated for the recognition of *washoku* as UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage. In the lacquerware and ceramics industry, collaborations involving the sharing of Japanese designs and advanced techniques between Japanese craftsmen and their WNJ apprentice counterparts are giving rise to evident conflicts of interest.[156] As this trend continues, the deeply rooted narratives of Japanese cultural superiority may face even greater challenges and the conflicts emerging in the gastro, ceramics and lacquer industry are just the tip of the iceberg. On the other hand, from a political-ideological perspective, the legitimacy of these WNJ businesses is intricately linked to the often

[153] Giroux, H.A. (1994) '"Consuming Social Change": The United Colors of Benetton', Cultural Critique 26(winter): 5–32.; A case study from Israel: Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni: *The Production and Consumption of 'Japanese Culture' in the Global Cultural Market*. In: Journal of Consumer Culture 2005 5. pp. 155-179. DOI: 10.1177/1469540505053092

[154] rakugo, tea ceremony, shakuhachi, haiku, swordsmithing, geisha, ninja, lacquerware, raku, sumo, kirie, furoshiki, kokeshi, awa-odori, yosakoi dance, ikebana, calligraphy, netsuke carving, koto-playing, taiko-drumming, garden designing, bonsai, mizuhiki knot tying, enka-singing, butoh dance, karuta game, yatai food stalls, Japanese kites, origami

[155] James Farrer & Chuanfei Wang (2020): *Who owns a cuisine? The grassroots politics of Japanese food in Europe*, Asian Anthropology, DOI: 10.1080/1683478X.2020.1774960

[156] An article from 2021 describes some of these tensions: https://japannews.yomiuri.co.jp/culture/art/20221117-71324 (accessed 2023 Aug.)

explicit Western regurgitation of Japanese nationalistic discourses of ‘pure and unique Japaneseness’ and constructed/reimagined Japanese traditions.[157] These foreigners not only willingly support and perpetuate the ideology of *Nihonjinron*, but also actively contribute to the preservation of a preconceived Japanese identity as the quintessential and transcendental 'Other.' While this outward reinforcement of the *Nihonjinron* ideology may provide a protective buffer for the Japanese, as Keizo Nagatani and Akio Tanaka put it: “*there may come a time when the assumed essential qualities of Japaneseness are no longer familiar but instead foreign to the Japanese themselves*”.[158] It is not surprising that, as early as 1983, Isamu Kurita noted that traditional Japanese arts had already become 'alien and exotic' in contemporary Japan.[159] Ethical and culturally conscious WNJ actors are capable of mindfully integrating Japanese techniques into their native or original art (or other cultural activities) if they truly understand and respect the history and legacy of the cultural elements they are using, and if they approach them with due sensitivity and self-reflectivity. They should be capable of promoting 'assimilation' and rejecting superficial exoticism. By taking this approach, they can adapt Japanese design principles independently of their 'Japaneseness' to create designs appropriate for the modern times in which they live. In turn, they can conscientiously contribute to infusing these traditional cultural practices with a renewed sense of creativity. Unfortunately, WNJ actors of this conscious type remain scarce.

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[157] In the case of Japanese gardens, for instance, five Western figures – Dresser, Morse, Conder, Taut, and Tunnard – shaped Western perceptions between the 1870s and 1930s. Their portrayals emphasized an idealized vision of beauty, simplicity, and spirituality, often rooted in premodern notions rather than contemporary realities. These depictions contributed to enduring aesthetic stereotypes of Japan in the West. See: Craig, Claudia: *Notions of Japaneseness in Western Interpretations of Japanese Garden Design, 1870s-1930s.* New Voices 6 (2014): 1-25.; In this context, the story of the Japanese garden at Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna deserves mention. Created in 1913 after court gardeners visited the 1912 London Garden Exhibition, it later fell into neglect and was ‘rediscovered’ in 1996. Although not originally intended as a Japanese garden, it was redefined as one through the enthusiasm and narrative framing surrounding its rediscovery, allowing Austria to retrospectively align with the broader Western trend of Japanese garden construction around the 1900s. See: Jessica Boentges: *Representations of Japanese gardens in the West at the turn of the 20th Century: The case studies of Clingendael and Schönbrunn*. Master Thesis, Leiden University, 2022., pp. 35-38.; When examining domestic perceptions of ‘Japaneseness’, it is worth referring to a 2003 attitude survey conducted by NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation), in which 95% of respondents stated that they “*feel glad to have been born Japanese*”. The author of this book lived in Japan between 2007 and 2009 and often shared an inside joke with his close Japanese friends. As a non-Japanese, whenever he was in a happy or content state of mind, or experiencing a particularly pleasant situation, he would jokingly say,「日本人で良かったなぁ」(“I’m glad to be Japanese”), which would always prompt a proper manzai-style 突っ込み (comic retort) from his friends, insisting that there was no way he could be Japanese. However, when taking such phrases and survey results seriously, researchers have pointed out that these findings should not necessarily be interpreted as expressions of life satisfaction or happiness. Rather, they reflect a strong sense of ethnic and national identity, conveyed through the use of this cultural border-marking phrase. See: Coulmas, Florian. (2007). *Population decline and ageing in Japan: The social consequences*. London: Routledge. p. 3.

[158] Keizo Nagatani, Akio Tanaka: *Perception Gaps: An Introduction* (Chapter 1) In: Japan and the West: The Perception Gap byKeizo Nagatani, David W. Edgington, Routledge, 2020.

[159] Kurita, Isamu: *Revival of the Japanese Tradition*. In: Journal of Popular Culture, 17(1), p. 131.

Japanese children, c. 1908 (private collection)

Literary Agents of Accidental Soft Power

There are trendsetter WNJ individuals who were unawarely contributing to Japanese soft power long before Japanese diplomacy recognized the potential of incorporating their areas of interest into soft-power strategies. In this context, it is important to note that in Japan, the rediscovery of classical Japanese literature held significant political and ideological importance, as it was employed to define national boundaries after the First World War. As Thomas Lamarra has argued, Japanese literary critics, by identifying distinct elements of Japanese speech within ancient texts, have long applied a Wilsonian model to assert the existence of a Japanese culture and, by extension, a Japanese nation. In the Wilsonian framework – derived from the ideas of U.S. President Woodrow Wilson – nations are primarily defined by shared cultural and linguistic identities, which in turn serve to justify political sovereignty and territorial integrity. Within this model, language functions not merely as a means of communication but as a crucial marker that delineates cultural boundaries, transforming literary expression into an assertion of national belonging. In particular, postwar Japanese scholars have interpreted classical *waka* poetry as an embodiment of national speech, thereby retroactively linking the emergence of ninth-century literary traditions to the

formation of a cohesive modern Japanese nation.[160] It appears that WNJ individuals did not play a strategically significant role in reinforcing 'Japaneseness' from an outsider perspective through active participation in writing or disseminating classical Japanese poetry until more recent times. One of these WNJ figures is Herman van Rompuy, a former Prime Minister of Belgium and the inaugural President of the European Council. He has been an ardent haiku poet for decades, earning him the nickname 'Haiku Herman'. He became the first Haiku Ambassador for EU-Japan Friendship in 2015. In 2022, he visited Japan at the invitation of the Haiku International Association, which aims to have Haiku registered on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List.[161] Meanwhile in Hungary, Judit Vihar, a retired Russologist-Japanologist, literary historian, haiku enthusiast, and former President of The Hungary–Japan Friendship Association, had a dream in 2023: she planned to establish the world's first (outside of Japan) Haiku Museum in Hungary.[162] The realization of her dream project is quite telling: in December 2024, the Hungary-Japan Friendship Association did in fact open a 'Japan club' in a rented, humble commercial space not far from the Museum of Ethnography in Budapest, commemorating the event with a modest 'special celebration' of Judit Vihar's oeuvre. It seems they quickly realized that calling a social fan club a 'museum' might raise a few eyebrows, so instead, they settled on a more subtle, yet rather brilliant touch – a printed, laminated A4 sheet mounted on the beckoning green iron bars at the entrance, proudly proclaiming a single word: 'Haiku'. Remaining on the theme of Haiku, we should cast our eyes on the globalized haiku frenzy brewing across Europe, which is a truly interesting phenomenon. Dóra Mărcuțiu-Rácz demonstrates that nowadays, Instagram accounts are flooded with haiku-like poems, blurring the line between vulgar/kitsch haikus and the more 'valuable' ones. Social media has completely de-hierarchized previously known

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[160] Thomas Lamarre: *Between Empire and Nation. The Problem of Influence and Reaction in Postwar Waka Criticism.* In: Livia Monnet (ed.): Approches critiques de la pensée japonaise du XXe siècle, pp. 425-448.; Thomas makes a brilliant observation when he writes that "*literary criticism and history in Japan are organized as 'national literary studies'*(国文学)*and 'national history'*(国史) *– and if critique remains at this level, it risks becoming a mere exposure and denunciation of nationalism*. (...) *In literary and historical studies of early Japan, one general aim is to show how Japan responded actively and selectively to China, in an attempt to reverse the order of priority implicit in studies of Chinese influence. To achieve this reversal, studies of early Japan invariably take the logic of selective reception to its limit: not only did early Japan respond actively to China, but it also resisted and overturned Chinese influence.*" See: Thomas Lamarre: *Between Empire and Nation. The Problem of Influence and Reaction in Postwar Waka Criticism.* In: Livia Monnet (ed.): Approches critiques de la pensée japonaise du XXe siècle, pp. 426-427.

[161] Yuka Matsumoto: *'Haiku Herman' speaks of allure, appeal of haiku*, Yomiuri Shimbun, 2022.09.15. https://japannews.yomiuri.co.jp/culture/books-literature/20220915-58307/ (accessed: 2023 Aug.)

[162] https://mjbt.hu/2023/05/tisztujitas-a-magyar-japan-barati-tarsasagban/. (accessed: 2023 Aug.) She received a 2800 dollar initial fund for this idea from a Japanese company in Hungary. According to a blog post of a contemporary Japanese Haiku poet, the 'Haiku Museum Budapest' was about to open in October 2024. https://banyanatsuishi.seesaa.net/article/503647256.html (accessed: 2024 June).

conventional forms of communication; instead, it enforces its own rules, creating an 'elite' based on shares, likes, and user traffic. This medium values short impulses and powerful visuals. Consequently, the literature shared on social media is typically brief, simple, and click-oriented, often accompanied by an esoteric, spiritualistic self-help nature. Reception time doesn't have to last longer than viewing a picture. From this perspective, it's intriguing that the Japanese haiku form is perfectly adaptable to these expectations, making it quickly become one of the most popular literary genres on Instagram. The search term #haiku in 2020 yielded nearly one million results. These Instagram haikus adhere to the genre requirements of haiku, but they have developed their own, less refined style code. Sometimes, the haiku form serves as an excuse to cloak the supposed literary value of a poem based on clichés. Moreover, the European 'Insta-haiku' functions as a tool for conscious self-marketing, aiding authors in accumulating followers. These followers can later become important influencing factors for (presumed) profit. Social media appears to blur the boundaries and hierarchical differences between literary magazines and independent author publications. Simultaneously, the line between dilettantism and poetry also seems to blur.[163] In light of the above, it is interesting to read how classical Japanese poetry was perceived by Basil Hall Chamberlain, one of the foremost British Japanologists active in Japan in 1904:

> "*The narrow bounds (...) contributed towards the same undesirable end. It contributed doubly – on the one hand, by enabling almost anybody to say something in verse, on the other, by making it well-nigh impossible for even the truest poet to say anything of value. Certain themes are excluded by its rules, and it lays half the dictionary under a ban. (...) Naturally, the brevity needed to put any statement into so narrow a compass soon led to an elliptical and enigmatic style which continually crosses the borderline of obscurity."*[164]

The Western/semi-peripheral ego and its engagement with Japan

It is becoming increasingly evident that in the act of sacrificing 'things Japanese' on the selfish altar of the Western/semi-peripheral ego, the engagement with Japan itself

[163] Mărcuțiu-Rácz Dóra: *„Pontosan olyan, mint egy vers": Giccs, vulgarizált haikuk és Insta-versek a kortárs magyar irodalom online terében*
https://revistaechinox.ro/2020/04/giccs-vulgarizalt-haikuk-es-insta-versek/?fbclid=IwAR3WN52nCHxmkbBOLZ7wWOEBiwlgEIdy67wKVNu-hnboDWlvUj7O4wrvtpE (accessed: 2023 Aug.)
[164] Basil Hall Chamberlain: *Japanese Things: Being Notes on Various Subjects Connected with Japan.* Charles E. Tuttles Co. 1904. pp. 376-378.

serves as a parallel reality and an escape from the realities of modern Western/semi-peripheral life. This can be observed in Japanese lifestyle and/or self-help literature and on Hungarian Japan-themed days, which were discussed earlier. In these instances, Japan, or the engagement with the highly-valued 'Other' serves as a form of ego-bathing: a quick, cost-effective spiritual sauna/wellness session for the troubled Western/semi-peripheral consumeristic ego. It's like a crystal ball used for self-healing through exoticism, orientalism, unconditional consumerism and spiritualism. Engagement with Japan on any level can liberate individuals from their own mundane local identities, allowing them to fill their troubled or hollow identity with an *exciting* faux Japanese identity, purely for the sake of amusement. The imaginary Japan therefore represents a means of escape to a safe, secure, and tranquil space – a departure from the disturbing or psychologically wearing public conditions of Europe, America or Hungary to an idyllic, pure milieu.[165] It's difficult not to perceive a strong element of escapism within these processes. Escapism is also clearly manifested in the Western sociolect of Zen and the unconditional infusion and sugarcoating of nearly every traditional Japanese cultural product (especially martial arts, but eventually extending to anything considered 'traditionally Japanese') with the concept of 'Zen'. In these contexts, Japanese cultural products are viewed as repositories of deep esoteric knowledge.[166] This phenomenon may be intricately connected to New Age Western contemporary paganism, which is characterized by its focus on nature, an anti-hierarchical stance, a strong feminist orientation, and inclusivity. Even the practice of Zen Buddhism – transplanted from Japan to the West – is seen by some as a kind of cult or sectarian response to personal strains caused by social difficulties and conflicts in the West.[167] It is also worth noting that Zen was introduced to Western scholarship not by Western orientalists, but by a group of

[165] There was an interesting online program (an online, virtual walk in Kyoto) in 2023, advertised on Facebook on a Hungarian National Holiday, titled "*Spend the 15th of March in Japan!*" and it was even categorised as a "Wellness" event. Approximately a thousand followers were interested in it.

[166] The Japanese thinker, Shin'ichi Hisamatsu claimed that the exalted spiritual sensibility of Zen (or "oriental nothingness") is most evident in Japan's traditional arts, which he saw as direct expressions of truth. Hisamatsu played a key role in popularizing the idea that Zen underpins nearly all Japanese fine arts. He argued that everything from Chinese landscape painting and calligraphy to garden design and Noh drama are manifestations of the Zen experience. Unfortunately, many Western scholars have uncritically accepted this Zen interpretation of Japan's finest artistic traditions, despite its overtly ideological nature and historical inaccuracy. It is also important to note that the cultivation and enjoyment of calligraphy, painting, poetry, and tea were common among Chinese literati, regardless of their religious or institutional affiliations. Therefore, it is not surprising that educated Chinese Buddhist priests, who proselytized in Japan, sought to promote their cultural heritage to their Japanese followers. As Robert H. Sharf points out, this context calls for skepticism when modern Zen apologists claim that Japan's arts are solely manifestations of the Zen experience. See: Robert H. Sharf: *The Zen of Japanese Nationalism History of Religions*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Aug., 1993), p. 3. The University of Chicago Press

[167] Henry C. Finney: *American Zen's "Japan Connection": A Critical Case Study of Zen Buddhism's Diffusion to the West*. In: Sociological Analysis Vol. 52, No. 4, Religious Movements and Social Movements (Winter, 1991), p. 379.

Japanese intellectuals and Zen priests, "*whose missionary zeal was often second only to their vexed fascination with Western culture*".[168] The West came to view Zen as a transcendent, unmediated personal experience. Some argue that this popular Western conception of Zen is not only conceptually inconsistent, but also a significant misinterpretation of traditional Zen teachings.[169]

For the Western or peripheral European Self[170] and ego, the notion of Japan can also function like a luxury brand, symbolically enhancing self-perception, especially for those with fragile egos. Engaging with Japanese culture or products serves as a status marker, elevating one's social standing, skills, and aesthetic acumen. The supposed authenticity of Japanese experiences or items heightens their desirability, reinforcing a sense of worth and attractiveness. It is not surprising that global fashion brands are capitalizing on the appeal of Japanese scripts by incorporating them into their designs. Findings from a 2023 study[171] indicate that this trend began gaining prominence in the 2010s as brands increasingly recognized the value of Japanese writing in enhancing their aesthetic and cultural appeal. Japanese scripts play a significant role in fashion due to their symbolic, cultural, and linguistic capital. Their distinctiveness allows brands to express uniqueness and originality in their designs. While English words and phrases have long been used in fashion for their status, eye-catching effect, and widespread familiarity, Japanese scripts have recently emerged as a new visual and cultural asset. This trend reflects Japan's established status in the global political economy, traditional culture, and subcultures. Brands strategically use Japanese scripts to exploit the positive image of Japanese products and enhance their own appeal. By incorporating Japanese writing, brands seek to differentiate themselves from competitors, particularly from Chinese manufacturers, and to reinforce an image of exclusivity and authenticity. The distinctiveness of Japanese scripts makes them a valuable design element, contributing to the originality of fashion items. Printing in Japanese generates a "mock Japaneseness" that adds a perceived sense of authenticity and aesthetic appeal. Since Japanese is not

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[168] Robert H. Sharf: *The Zen of Japanese Nationalism History of Religions*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Aug., 1993), p. 3. The University of Chicago Press

[169] For a detailed exploration of the debates between Zen traditionalists and their critics – and a discussion on moving beyond their rigid polarization by offering a more balanced and nuanced approach that integrates insights from both perspectives – see: Steven Heine: *Zen Skin, Zen Marrow: Will the Real Zen Buddhism Please Stand Up?*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2008.

[170] The Self is "*the true, undamaged, born essence of a person.*" Schwartz, R. C., & Sweezy, M. (2020). *Internal family systems therapy*, 2nd ed. The Guilford Press.

[171] Takako Kawabata: *Roles of Japanese scripts in Western fashion: Fusion and New Orientalism* In: dObra[s] – revista da Associação Brasileira de Estudos de Pesquisas em Moda 38 (2023) pp. 61-81.

widely understood outside Japan, those who recognize it may feel a sense of privilege within niche cultural circles, particularly among individuals interested in Asian cultures. Japanese scripts also have strong attention-grabbing effects, which are essential for fashion brands aiming to create visually compelling and unique designs. Through their use, brands expect to increase their market value, leveraging the prestige associated with Japanese culture.[172]

The notion of Japan can serve as a scaffolding for the battered Hungarian identity as well, both on a personal level and within the larger global landscape. As "*authentic Japanese culture*"[173] transitions from a localized culture to a globally accepted and cultivated *brand*, it begins to resemble fast fashion – widely consumed and sought after. Its 'fashionista', the Japanophile, this cultural mimicry persona, is the direct result of the overall Japanisation (or self-Japanisation) of the world, which can be seen as one of the most successful and viral cultural phenomena of the 20th and 21st centuries. From a neuroscientific perspective, the act of purchasing or literally 'putting on' Japanese culture activates the brain's reward centers, releasing dopamine and creating a sense of pleasure and fulfillment. This emotional response reinforces the desire for Japan as an identity, or rather, as a way to project an image where one's own identity is lacking. For some, adopting elements of Japanese culture becomes a way to differentiate and distance themselves from their native identity. This aligns with the 'halo effect' seen in the luxury market, where the positive reputation of a brand influences how individuals view themselves, boosting self-esteem and providing a sense of belonging. People naturally feel better when they look or feel attractive, elevating their spirits and self-worth. In this

[172] Takako Kawabata: *Roles of Japanese scripts in Western fashion: Fusion and New Orientalism* In: dObra[s] – revista da Associação Brasileira de Estudos de Pesquisas em Moda 38 (2023) pp. 62-73.

[173] The issue with authenticity, in relation to 'Japaneseness', is that national identity is not a fixed concept, but rather "*a battleground where various social groups compete to define what constitutes the 'national'*". In Koichi Iwabuchi's interpretation of Harumi Befu and Eric Hobsbawm, Japan adopted various ideologies, myths, and 'invented traditions' to create a unified national identity. Since the mid-19th century, the concept of 'Japaneseness' has been shaped through a process known as 'samuraisation', which disseminated the Confucian values of the samurai class – despite them comprising only six percent of the population at the time. These values, associated with the samurai ideal, included loyalty, hierarchy, diligence, and the subordination of women, and were reinforced through education and the workplace. Iwabuchi highlights that this process was neither natural nor flawless, revealing Japan's society to be fragmented rather than truly homogeneous. Ultimately, Japan's unity remains a fragile and constructed concept. Koichi Iwabuchi: *Complicit exoticism: Japan and its other.* In: Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media & Culture Vol. 8, No. 2, 1994.; The paradox of authenticity further complicates matters: to perceive something as *authentic*, it must first be *labeled or recognized* as such. Yet once it carries this label, authenticity becomes a mediated sign of *itself* – filtered through cultural expectations, discourses, and codes – and thus loses the uncorrupted, "pure" authenticity that exists independently of external mediation. In other words, authenticity can never fully exist outside the frameworks that define and signify it, making it simultaneously sought-after and inherently constructed. See: Jonathan Culler: *A turizmus szemiotikája*, ford. Varsányi Anita Alinka. In: Túl a turistatekinteten, szerk. Bódi Jenő, Pusztai Bertalan, Budapest–Pécs–Szeged, Gondolat Kiadó, 2012, pp. 23–40.

way, the notion of Japan becomes a tool to compensate for a perceived lack of identity, fulfilling an innate human quest for authenticity and social belonging.

Japanophile engagement with Japan: a deep emotional charge coupled with tangible rewards

Engaging with Japan on almost any level evokes a profound emotional experience.[174] When we examine the Hungarian words associated with Japan or 'things Japanese' in Hungarian public discourse, we tend to find words such as: adoration, mania, admiration, affection, respect, love, and gratitude.[175] Leslie Bow argues that the desire and fetishization of 'Asian things' can be understood as a manifestation of racial pleasure, wherein 'Asianness' is often reduced to a singular trait – sexual fetishism tainted by racial bias. A 2024 survey conducted in Hungary highlighted the prevalence of sexual fetishism toward Asian women among Hungarian men. In this survey, Hungarian participants were asked whether there was an ethnic group or nationality whose members they found generally more attractive.[176] While 39% answered "no", among those who responded "yes", Latin Americans ranked highest with 17%, closely followed by "*Far Easterners*"[177] (a category that included "*Chinese, Vietnamese, and Thais*" without the Japanese) at 16%. Western and Southern Europeans ranked third with 15%, while the Japanese placed fourth with 14%. When examining gender differences, men showed a stronger preference for "*Far Easterners*" who topped their list at 23%, followed by the Japanese at 20%. In contrast, women were less inclined to categorize sexual attraction based on ethnicity or nationality. On their list, Japanese ranked sixth, with only 7% finding them particularly attractive. Paradoxically, attraction can simultaneously embody a form of anti-Asian bias. For instance, the act of collecting Japanese 'kawaii' items, such as figurines and cute objects, can be seen as a subtle form of domination. While these Japanese items bring delight, joy, and spark interest, they also appeal to one's sense of control over something small, helpless, and infantile. There may be a

[174] See also: De Antoni, A., & Cook, E. E. (2019). *Feeling (with) Japan: affective, sensory and material entanglements in the field*. Asian Anthropology, 18(3), 139–153. https://doi.org/10.1080/1683478X.2019.1633061; Several surveys support the claim that Japanese popular culture evokes positive and deeply emotional feelings. Nissim Otmazgin: *Meta-narratives of Japanese Popular Culture and of Japan in Different Regional Contexts: Perspectives from East Asia, Western Europe, and the Middle East*. Regioninės studijos, 2013. p. 92.

[175] In Hungarian: rajongás, mánia, csodálat, vonzalom, tisztelet, szerelem, hála

[176] A Survey conducted among 16-59 yrs old Hungarians by Opinio Institute; "*Hogyan szeretünk?*", Figure 4. https://opinio.hu/hogyan-szeretunk/ (accessed: 2024 Sept.)

[177] this is the wording that was actually used in the survey

complex psychology at play here, where the owner subconsciously acknowledges the object's subordinate position.[178] Similar psychological mechanisms can be observed in press coverage about Japan in Britain. Beneath their seemingly light-hearted tone, there may be an underlying hostility and fear appearing in the discussions of cultural difference. The 'exotic Japan' genre of journalism expresses a coded form of racial thinking by encapsulating the notion that while Japan may look modern and Western, it is 'really' traditional and Asian, meaning: however modern and Western it might appear, Japan has an unchanging Asian soul. The deceptive appearances idea thus equates the *supposed unworthiness* of Japan with the country's hidden 'Asianness'. The apparent focus on cultural difference and the obsessive discussion of Japanese 'cultural difference' itself easily slips into racial thinking about the 'national character', the 'Japanese psyche', or the 'Asian soul', and therefore it carries the implication of innate, racial difference within itself. [179]

Japanophiles and young individuals immersed deeply in Japanese geek culture might be more inclined to exhibit xenophilic attitudes (explicit or implicit disdain for their own cultural in-group) and allophilic attitudes (appreciation or overvaluation of a cultural outgroup). In a quest for uniqueness and individuality, young individuals might gravitate towards exhibiting attitudes that set them apart from the norm. Embracing foreign cultures can be a way to establish a distinct identity within geek culture.[180] From empirical observation, the author of this book posits a possibly controversial assumption: there might be a direct correlation between one's (grandiose) narcissistic psychopathology and/or identity crisis, and their exalted Japanophilia.[181] For them (for the modern Eastern European ego grappling with an identity crisis), Japan functions as a form of *life-flavouring*, a virtual Vegeta / Podravka / Umami / MSG. Some Hungarian Japanophiles, who teach traditional Japanese arts and crafts, can be viewed as

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[178] Leslie Bow: *Racist Love: Asian Abstraction and the Pleasures of Fantasy*, Duke University Press, 2022

[179] Hammond, Phil (1999). *The Mystification of Culture: Western Perceptions of Japan*. International Communication Gazette, 61(3-4), 311–325.

[180] Some might argue that these individuals are actually engaging in a healthy form of cultural exchange. Rather than demonstrating disdain for their own in-group, they could be showcasing open-mindedness and a willingness to learn from and appreciate other cultures. Geek culture often revolves around diverse interests such as comics, gaming, and technology. People involved in this culture might naturally have a broader range of interests, leading them to appreciate aspects of various cultures without necessarily devaluing their own. In regard to globalisation, some might argue that it has led to increased exposure to different cultures and ideas. Embracing xenophilic and allophilic attitudes can be seen as a positive response to globalisation, fostering understanding and empathy among diverse groups.

[181] Some say that Western racial affection or 'love' towards Asians or Asian culture itself is fundamentally narcissistic. This assumption can be partly supported by some research in geek culture. See: Tyler W. Andrews, Stewart McCann: *The relation of geek culture engagement to narcissism and self-esteem: Potential roles of admiration, rivalry, status, and inclusion* April 2022, Current Psychology 41(4) DOI:10.1007/s12144-020-00697-1 (accessed: 2023 Aug.)

trendsetters who shape attitudes toward Japan in Hungary. Within the safe confines of a parallel, constructed reality, they assume leadership roles, gaining a sense of empowerment. These Japanophiles cultivate a positive, non-critical echo chamber around themselves, brimming with self-affirmation, respect, likes, and positive feedback. At times, their Japanophilia and parallel reality, coupled with occasional instances of intentional or unintentional cultural appropriation[182] and Nihonjinron-endorsement[183], find validation through the current soft power cultural diplomacy, further validating the 'authenticity' of their 'Japan-mania' and parallel reality. In this regard, Japanese soft power shifted gears in Hungary in 2024. The Japanese Embassy decided to award a special prize at Hungary's largest convention for cosplayers. In the communiqué from the Embassy, they explained the reason for establishing this prize:

> "*The interest of young Hungarians in Japanese subculture has grown rapidly in recent years. The embassy wishes to express its appreciation for Hungarian youth who are passionate about cosplay culture and Japan, so it decided to donate the Great Ambassador Award to a group or individual entrant in the Cosplay Performance competition from this year onwards. We hope that this will further encourage interest in Japanese pop culture, such as anime, manga, idols, and video games.*"[184]

[182] In the Hungarian case, things Japanese are appropriated because of their high status and marketability. The rationale behind this cultural appropriation is to utilise Japanese cultural elements as a source of borrowed power/influence. In this instance, it involves the appropriation of an 'elite' cultural resource by initially less powerful outsiders. More on "borrowed power": Ziff, Bruce, and Pratima V. Rao. 1997. " *Introduction to Cultural Appropriation: A Framework forAnalysis.* " In Borrowed Power: Essays on Cultural Appropriation , edited by B. Ziff and P. V. Rao,1 – 27. Trenton, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

[183] For example, a valuable resource for understanding the motives behind the popular Western appropriation of the 'authentic Japanese tea ceremony' – and its profound ties to Japanese nationalism, analyzed from the critical perspective of a certified non-Japanese tea ceremony master – can be found here: Kristin Surak: *Making Tea, Making Japan – Cultural Nationalism in Practice* 2012 Stanford University Press. Awarded the 2014 Book of the Year by the ASA Section on Asia and Asian America, this work asks a compelling question: how can the cultural practice of a select few come to embody an entire nation? Additionally, Western practitioners of traditional Japanese cultural products, such as martial arts or even Zen, are often unaware that these cultural elements have been touted since the Meiji era as the very 'heart and essence of Japanese culture'.

[184] https://www.facebook.com/mondomagazin/posts/pfbid0So8CJcaXpJ1oatqiN14U9ygfpQKTxRZuKNfsChKZZUgANsQeKbTTz9P4eRr36b7fl (accessed: 2024 June) Translated from Hungarian to English by the author.

Enoshima, c. 1890 (Weltmuseum)

In her 2018 PhD thesis, Rebecca Lynn Carlson offers valuable insights into Japanophiles, focusing on the American otaku subculture – individuals deeply engaged with Japanese pop culture, such as anime, manga, and video games. Notably, otaku are not merely consumers; they also take on the role of producers. The term *otaku* has been embraced by American fans as a positive self-descriptor, used both as an expression of proud defiance and as a half-joking form of self-deprecation. Although, it still carries negative connotations, and many people resist the label. As Carlson points out: "*although the excessive nature of otaku-ness is present in the Japanese origin and use of the term, its signal as Japanese is, of course, absent. In English, the term otaku cannot escape its reference to the Japanese language or its use as marking an interest in Japan more broadly*".[185] Otaku culture provides a lens through which Western Non-Japanese (WNJ) Japanophiles engage with Japanese culture, often attempting to embody and mimic *Japaneseness*. They contribute directly to discourse production by circulating narratives of 'Japanese culture'. Meanwhile, within Japan, the pursuit of a presumed *authenticity* in representations of the country functions as a mechanism for maintaining national boundaries. Declaring something the 'real Japan' constructs an imagined space that reinforces ethnocentric narratives, despite

[185] Carlson, Rebecca, (2018) *More Japanese than Japanese: Subjectivation in the Age of Brand Nationalism and the Internet.* Doctoral Dissertation. University of Pittsburgh. p. 16.

Japan itself being a discourse continually reshaped by various actors. This process became particularly visible in the 1980s when Japan's economic rise and technological innovations – such as Nintendo's marketing strategies, which deliberately fabricated scarcity to generate insatiable consumer demand – helped construct Japan as both desirable and unattainable.

Generational shifts in fandom illustrate how Japanophilia has evolved from a fascination with cultural commodities, like anime and video games, to a broader engagement with an essentialized *Japaneseness*. This *Japaneseness* is not merely a product's origin but an aesthetic, expressive, or even spiritual sensibility perceived as *uniquely Japanese*. It can also be viewed as a commodified destination that one can "strain towards", but never actually attain. Yet, this perception overlooks the complexities of global media production, where commodities become Japanese through processes of negotiation and interpretation. The idea of an unattainable *Japaneseness* turns Japan into a site of longing rather than belonging, reinforced by discourse networks that frame Japan as an object to be consumed rather than a space for inclusion, especially for otaku. Carlson asserts that *Japaneseness* is communicated "*not necessarily to the other, but through the other (in a global media arena), to speak to the national self*."[186] She argues that national campaigns like *Cool Japan* are "*not only a reaction to insecurities wrought by increased circulations, which threaten mass social values, or an attempt to overcome a destabilizing economic recession, but also an attempt to put nation-work to work in the hands of non-nationals through their consumption of state-approved symbols like cuteness*".[187]

After the economic downturn of the 1990s, Japan's soft power strategies increasingly relied on cultural diplomacy to maintain this constructed distinctiveness in the global market. The notion of a 'real Japan' is performative rather than substantive. It operates through a binary opposition between Japan and the foreign, a dynamic that extends to domestic portrayals of WNJ otaku. Television programs frame foreigners as outsiders whose perspectives reinforce Japanese identity rather than integrate them into the imagined national community. These shows produce "*a consumable Western, always white, foreigner who is non-threatening but misguided, interested in cliché Japanese traditions*".[188] They function

[186] Carlson, Rebecca, (2018) *More Japanese than Japanese: Subjectivation in the Age of Brand Nationalism and the Internet.* Doctoral Dissertation. University of Pittsburgh. p. 124.
[187] Carlson, Rebecca, (2018) *More Japanese than Japanese: Subjectivation in the Age of Brand Nationalism and the Internet.* Doctoral Dissertation. University of Pittsburgh. p. 124.
[188] Carlson, Rebecca, (2018) *More Japanese than Japanese: Subjectivation in the Age of Brand Nationalism and the*

"*fundamentally to educate the Japanese public about what interests and values they should have as Japanese, reflected by the white foreigners who are thought to desire the 'true' Japan*".[189] In these portrayals,

> "*whiteness is framed as a particular kind of non-threatening and non-violent, yet again a popularly imagined and consumed, otherness; a context under which it is entirely acceptable to discriminate, call out, mark, and otherwise label as different in public spaces and within the hearing of all. The construction in media, policy, and common imagination of a white, English-speaking foreigner – friendly but a bit bumbling (probably a kind teacher! or a fan of bonsai!) – exists alongside a foreigner who is probably non-white and therefore more likely to be portrayed as a gang member, criminal, or, in today's context, a terrorist.*"[190]

This aligns with David Leheny's argument that nation branding helps states cope with decline by seeking external validation of their perceived virtues.[191] By being actively used by the media and the state, WNJ otaku themselves contribute to the reinforcement of Japan's symbolic inaccessibility by internalizing and reproducing these boundaries. Otaku often arrive in Japan with a pre-formed awareness of their own foreignness. They desire both to belong and to fetishize their exclusion – an experience that can be interpreted as a form of masochism. Many begin their engagement in online spaces before transitioning to real-world encounters, where they face systematic marginalization and repetitive exclusion. Ironically, their efforts to blend in – to demonstrate cultural competence – require them to adopt behaviors that, while mimetic, remain distinctly *unlocal*. No matter how much an otaku studies the language, adapts their mindset, or refines their behavior, they are consistently reminded of their outsider status. This exclusion is structurally embedded, serving as a "*routinized racial, cultural, and linguistic barrier placed between the 'us' and the 'them.'*"[192] While Japanese citizens frequently break social norms, WNJ otaku are held to an impossible standard of correctness, reinforcing their symbolic separation. This

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Internet. Doctoral Dissertation. University of Pittsburgh. p. 189.

[189] Carlson, Rebecca, (2018) *More Japanese than Japanese: Subjectivation in the Age of Brand Nationalism and the Internet.* Doctoral Dissertation. University of Pittsburgh. p. 189.

[190] Carlson, Rebecca, (2018) *More Japanese than Japanese: Subjectivation in the Age of Brand Nationalism and the Internet.* Doctoral Dissertation. University of Pittsburgh. p. 193.

[191] Leheny, David 2006 *A Narrow Place to Cross Swords: Soft Power and the Politics of Japanese Popular Culture in East Asia.* In: Beyond Japan: The Dynamics of East Asian Regionalism. Peter J. Katzenstein & Takashi Shiraishi, eds. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. pp. 211- 233.

[192] Carlson, Rebecca, (2018) *More Japanese than Japanese: Subjectivation in the Age of Brand Nationalism and the Internet.* Doctoral Dissertation. University of Pittsburgh. p. 213.

exclusion extends beyond the social sphere to questions of power. Japanese citizens gain authority by understanding when social rules can be bent, but WNJ otaku remain symbolically locked out of this flexibility, reinforcing their “eternal outsider status”. Even those who integrate deeply into local communities, families, and workplaces are ultimately denied the leverage that comes with belonging to the *ethnic nation*. As a result, WNJ otaku often turn to each other, creating parallel communities where they reproduce the rules of Japanese society in a mimetic fashion. Still, they do not gain the same privileges as the native-born; rather, their expertise remains in conversation with other outsiders, reinforcing the very structures that exclude them. By participating in this cycle, WNJ otaku inadvertently contribute to the reproduction of an *authentic Japan* that remains inaccessible to them. This mirrors bureaucratic processes of state-making, where outsiders help reinforce national legibility. In online spaces, WNJ otaku often communicate the boundaries of *Japaneseness* to others – including those living outside Japan. The ideological construction of *Japaneseness* is constantly at play, yet this essentialized identity obscures the fluidity of real social life. Scholars who critique otaku as superficial consumers of *J-cool* media unintentionally reinforce the notion that Japan is inherently separate from outsiders. By portraying fans as misguided, they reaffirm the idea that cultural differences are fixed rather than socially constructed, ignoring how Japan is continually negotiated by multiple actors. The *real Japan*, then, is recursively manufactured – not only by the Japanese state and its citizens but also by foreign academics, journalists, historians, and WNJ otaku living in Japan. These outsiders engage in the normalization of their own marginalization, refining their roles as *good foreigners* within a tightly constrained field of possibilities. Carlson makes a brilliant observation: globalization (in this case, the globalization of *Japaneseness*) is often framed as a force that transcends borders, yet it ironically reinforces the Japanese by embedding WNJ otaku within exclusionary structures. Carlson claims that otaku are not only lifestyle migrants or fetishistic consumers/producers but also labor migrants, whose literacy skills and mobility position them as informal cultural brokers, codifying what *Japaneseness* means for other foreigners. The Japanese government has actively utilized otaku labor – particularly that of exchange students and tourists – to achieve its cultural diplomacy and economic goals. In this sense, otaku function as *language workers*, brokering Japanese cultural products on the global stage, often without compensation, driven by their passion for an imagined authenticity. Yet, while otaku appear geographically and culturally mobile, their social mobility is severely restricted once they arrive in Japan. They are marked as conspicuously Western, legally and socially

marginalized, and excluded from mainstream society. In their everyday lives, otaku reinscribe categories of belonging and exclusion onto others, striving not just to mimic Japanese behavior but to perfect it – to become more authentically Japanese than the Japanese themselves.[193] In reality, this remains an impossible aspiration. No matter how much effort they put into embodying Japaneseness, they remain locked in a structure that continually marks them as outsiders – often leading them to return home, either because they give up on fitting in or because they grow tired of their exclusion.

Group picture by Wilhelm Burger (ÖNB) c. 1870.

Women and Engagement with 'things Japanese' in Hungary

There is an intriguing characteristic regarding the lack of gender parity in Japanology in Hungary. From its inception in 1986, it has developed into a discipline predominantly cultivated by women. The author of this book conducted a quick, non-representative sampling to investigate whether women are more active in academic fields related to Japan. The results of this mini-statistics analysis are as follows:

- 56% of online pandemic lectures at the Japan Foundation Budapest were delivered by women (2020-2021)
- heads of Japanology departments: 100% women (KRE, ELTE, 2021)
- among lecturers in Hungarian Universities with Japanology departments, 58% are women (2021)

[193] There was a particularly strange online trend in 2023 called 'Race Change to Another' (RCTA), where non-Asians, influenced by the global popularity of Japanese culture through anime and J-pop, attempted to 'transform' themselves into East Asians, often aiming to appear Japanese. 'Methods' included listening to subliminal audio while sleeping, hoping for physical changes such as altered eye shapes or hair color.
https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/race-change-to-another-trend-online-rcna93759 (accessed: 2025 Feb.)

- the management of the Hungary–Japan Friendship Association consists of 43% women (with the president being a woman in 2021)
- at the '*Hungarian and Japanese Relations in the Light of the Last 30 Years*' Japanologist conference held in 2019, 65% of speakers were women
- in KRE University's Japanology courses, 75% of graduates were women (2000-2020)

In terms of women graduates, this can be partly explained by a growing gender parity trend in the EU in academic fields, as indicated by the EU's official *She Figures Report* from 2021. It might not be coincidental that during an online talk in 2023 April, Dyron Dabney (Ph.D. Jackson Bailey Memorial Endowed Chair for Japan Study/Institute for Education on Japan; Director of Japan Study; Associate Professor of Politics and Japanese Studies at Earlham College, USA) expressed an opinion about Japanese Studies, contending that "*(...) the field is largely white and largely female*."[194] When considering the perceived over-representation of women in Japanese studies, it is interesting to pair this observation with a claim by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who argued that when a job starts to have more women than men, it usually indicates that the job is losing its status, pay, and prestige. This shift makes the job less appealing to men, further diminishing its perceived value. The more a job becomes 'feminized,' the less valued it tends to be in society.[195] The same theory may also apply in academic circles, especially in the humanities. On the other side of the debate, American Japanese Studies scholar, Grace En-Yi Ting, is of the opinion (without citing statistical data) that the field of Japanese Studies in America is predominantly *white and male*. (Simultaneously, she might not be satisfied even with the allegedly scarce presence of women in the field, as she writes that "*Japanese studies must recognize and confront power harassment often directed by women at other women.*").[196] It is interesting to observe how personal experiences and perceptions about the gender situation in Japanese Studies in America differ from person to person. (Perhaps we can attribute this difference in perceptions and experiences to innate male or female chauvinism.)[197] Additionally, Grace En-Yi Ting

[194] *CJS Alumni Panel* | Melissa Van Wyk, Bradly Hammond, and Dyron Dabney (University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies Youtube Channel) https://youtu.be/NCUuonKWY8w?si=flhRUhpgZXSfs-zW&t=1719 (accessed: 2023 Aug)

[195] Pierre Bourdieu: *Masculine Domination*. Stanford University Press, 2001. P. 91.

[196] Grace En-Yi TING: *Negativity and Hope, or Addressing Gender and Race in Japanese Studies*. In: Gender and Sexuality, Vol. 15. Center for Gender Studies at the International Christian University, pp. 67-81.

[197] It should not be a question of whether the issue of gender parity or disparity (related to one's gender and generic vulnerability) should be considered more significant than an individual's scholarly and intellectual traits. It is evident that the latter should take precedence as the primary basis for selection, regardless of gender or physical traits. On the

expressed her opinion about Japanese studies, noting that individuals of colour (particularly those who are non-Japanese or non-Asian), and queer individuals (especially those who are *not* gay white men) "*are still few and far between*".[198] Subsequently, she asserts that the establishment of Japanology was influenced by racialized and gendered forms of desire. She cites Harry Harootunian, who highlighted that early male (presumably often white) scholars of Japan studies were "*motivated by the desire to gain entry in order to penetrate and thus comprehend the concealed secrets of native knowledge and sensibility*" and that it "*was frequently achieved by having Japanese wives who could also serve as native informants*".[199] Other scholars have made similarly interesting observations. They have briefly commented on the historically feminised role of Japanese language instructors, noting that Japanese language instruction has predominantly been a task undertaken by (mostly Japanese) women, as opposed to the 'more elite' task of teaching content courses on Japan, and, according to them, it looks like this dynamic continues in the present.[200]

Let's return to Hungary and take a brief look at other non-representative statistics related to online presence and social media activity among prominent Hungarian Japanologists, social media influencers, etc., who talk about Japan. The average distribution of females in these appearances is approximately 74%, indicating that more women spoke about Japan more frequently than men did in 2021 in Hungary on two platforms. Statistics were compiled from two sources, such as the Hungarian Asia expert podcast series 'OrientExpressz podcast': 66% women (between 2019-2021); and YouTube: 82% women (in 2021). It is intriguing to observe that information, experiences, and interpretations about the fundamentally patriarchal society and culture of Japan are primarily conveyed by Hungarian women in present-day Hungary. This is in stark contrast to the turn of the 19th-20th century when it was mainly Hungarian men who were shaping the discourses on Japan, thus shaping the image of Japan through their gender-filtered perspectives. (An interesting argument suggests that if one accepts Japan as a highly

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other hand, it is essential to discuss the potential hierarchy and power dynamics underlying this.

[198] Grace En-Yi TING: *Negativity and Hope, or Addressing Gender and Race in Japanese Studies*. In: Gender and Sexuality, Vol. 15. Center for Gender Studies at the International Christian University, pp. 67-81. She subsequently fails to provide any supportive statistics, unfortunately.

[199] Harootunian, H. (2002). *Postcoloniality's unconscious/area studies' desire*. In: M. Miyoshi and H. Harootunian (Ed.), Learning places: the afterlives of area studies (pp. 150-174). Durham, NC: Duke University Press., pp. 161-162.

[200] Fujii, J. (2014). *From deconstructing Genji to deep ecology: remembering Richard Okada. Proceedings of the association for Japanese literary studies 15*, 195-202; Tansman, A. (2002). *Japanese studies: the intangible act of translation*. In D. Szanton (Ed.), *The politics of knowledge: area studies and the disciplines*, UCIAS Edited Volumes (pp. 1-23)

patriarchal society, then young women would make the best researchers because they are most likely to have societal concepts *mansplained* to them – a view that seems reductive and overly focused on power dynamics.)[201]

From Japanology to Japanese Studies in Europe: A Brief Overview of Status, Evolution, Challenges, and Embedded Japanophilia Within

Japanology traces its origins to the broader field of Oriental Studies in Europe, which initially emerged from Biblical scholarship focused on the Middle East.[202] As the geographical and academic interest gradually shifted Eastward, Sinology was established first, with Japanology eventually developing on the fringes of Sinology as a spin-off.[203] Holland was the first European country to develop an academic interest in Japan, receiving attention in 1855, and, as the only European nation to maintain trade relations with Japan during its period of isolation, it was also home to the first Japanology program, established at Leiden University. The first professional chair in Japanology at Leiden, held by Johann Joseph Hoffmann (1805–1878), was originally intended to cover both Chinese and Japanese Studies. Following Holland, France took an interest in 1868,[204] followed by England and Germany in the 1870s.[205] The first International Congress of Orientalists (ICO), held in Paris in September 1873, marked a pivotal moment in the development of Oriental and Japan/Japanese Studies. The conference, led by French scholar Léon de Rosny (1837–1914), a pioneer in Japan/Japanese Studies, featured Japan as a central theme, reflecting his influence. Uniquely, the ICO initially targeted industrialists, merchants, and diplomats, in contrast to later congresses that would focus more on academic disciplines. A major accomplishment of this inaugural ICO was the creation of transcription systems for Japanese and other non-Western languages using Roman alphabets. The conference centered on four main objectives, all related to Japan's relationship with the West: 1) the establishment of Japanese transcription with Western

[201] Roger Goodman: *How to begin research: The diversity of Japanese Studies.* In: Studying Japan. Handbook of Research Designs, Fieldwork and Methods. Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, Germany 2020. p. 31.
[202] For a short historical overview of the study of Japanese culture within Japan, see: Josef Kreiner: *A Concrete Holistic Approach to the Study of Japanese Culture: An Example of Civilization Studies* In: SENRI Ethnological Studies, 16., 1984. pp. 37-49.
[203] Suzanne L. Marchand: *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Religion, Race, and Scholarship*, 2009, Cambridge University Press, pp. 99-100.
[204] Japanese language teaching started at INALCO (Institut National Des Langues et Civilisations Orientales) in 1863, and an official Chair was established in 1868.
[205] K. Moeshart, H. Riedijk, N. Tsuneda, H. Yip, M. Fitski, J.P.A. Kuijpers, D. N. W. Raatgever, C. Teune: *The Honorable Visitor – Japan in Leiden.* Brill, 2008. p. 66.

characters, 2) a comparison of civilizations between Japan and the West, 3) a comparison of scientific achievements, and 4) fostering cooperation between Japanese and Western scientists.[206] This congress was significant for Japan, as it provided a rare opportunity for Japanese representatives to present themselves directly to a Western audience. Thirty-four Japanese attendees participated among 1,064 registrants. It was a crucial moment for Japan to engage with Western intellectual circles. The 1873 congress set the stage for further connections, such as a meeting in London in 1891, where Arthur Diósy (1856–1923)[207] proposed the formation of a society to promote Japan/Japanese Studies, which later led to the establishment of the Japan Society of London. In Germany, the Seminar for Oriental Languages (SOS) was established in 1887 at Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin. This institution played a key role in shaping the careers of later Japanologists. Although its primary focus was on language instruction, it also incorporated elements of 'Landeskunde' – which today could be described as the 'content' in area studies. The first professor at the institution was Inoue Tetsujirō (1856–1944), one of Japan's leading nationalist ideologues during that period.[208] The first autonomous chair in Japanology at a German university was established at Universität Hamburg in 1914, with Karl Florenz, a former professor at the Imperial University in Tokyo, appointed to the position.[209] In parallel to Japanology, there was a term called “Yamatology”. This term emerged in Europe in the late 19th century to describe the study of Japanese history and culture. Interestingly, while Yamatology faded in most countries before WWI, it remained popular in Italy as a synonym for Japanology, particularly in the 1930s.[210] Italian scholars still occasionally use it today, though the term carries political-ideological undertones. Rooted in the ancient name for Japan (大和, Yamato), it evokes concepts of the “Yamato race and spirit”, emphasizing Japan’s perceived

[206] Fukunaga, Ai (2021) *British Collecting of Ceramics for Tea Gatherings from Meiji Japan: British Museum and Maidstone Museum Collections*. PhD thesis. SOAS University of London. https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/35824/ pp. 95-99.
[207] Arthur Diósy's father, Márton Diósy, served as a secretary to Lajos Kossuth, the Hungarian lawyer, journalist, and politician who was Regent-President of Hungary during the 1848–49 revolution. After the defeat in the War of Independence, Márton emigrated to London from Hungary. His son Arthur developed an interest in Asia during his student years. Although Arthur never visited Hungary, he spoke Hungarian fluently, alongside Japanese, French, Spanish, German, and Italian, and also studied Flemish and Portuguese. It is believed that Arthur had a deep and lasting friendship with Ármin Vámbéry, one of the most prominent figures in Hungarian Orientalism, although the specifics of their relationship remain unclear.
[208] Kiri Paramore (ed.): *Religion and Orientalism in Asian Studies*, 2018, Bloomsbury Publishing, p. 135.
[209] https://ct.uhh.de/en/ausstellung/weltwissen.html (accessed: 2024 Oct.) Further reading on the history of Japanology: Michael Wachutka: *Historical Reality or Metaphoric Expression?: Culturally Formed Contrasts in Karl Florenz' and Lida Takesato's Interpretations of Japanese Mythology* 2002.
[210] See YTOPIA’s Project page: https://pric.unive.it/projects/ytopia/home#c8906 (accessed: 2024 Oct.) “*The overall objective of YTOPIA is to analyse the discursive construction of the image of Japan in National Socialist Germany and Fascist Italy, as well as its relations with ideological features shared by both regimes (‘fascist minimum’).*”

'timeless essence'.[211]

Savitri Vishwanathan demonstrates that the interwar era brought significant developments in Japan/Japanese Studies in Europe. In 1926, the Maison Franco-Japonaise was established in Tokyo. Modern Japanese literature was translated by the first resident scholars, while research in Japanese folklore, ethnology, and archaeology was also conducted. In Germany, the 1933-1945 period was influenced by ideological propaganda, and Japanology was exploited by the National Socialists for political purposes, particularly to support the highly favored Berlin-Tokyo axis.[212] The Nazi shift in Japanese Studies brought politically driven individuals unprecedented opportunities to insert themselves into Japan-related affairs. Some scholars managed to avoid the ideological trap during 1933-1945 by retreating into philological translations. In 1935, German Japanology had three professorships, located in Hamburg, Leipzig, and Berlin. Beyond the universities, however, many interest clubs in Germany also shaped German-Japanese relations. Due to the Weimar Republic's multiple crises, the state could not pursue robust diplomacy with Japan, leaving a void that German civil society – often with significant support from the Japanese – filled by managing relations through these associations. As German society became Nazified, leadership roles were increasingly filled by unqualified individuals, knowledge of Japan was politicized, and dogmatism and party loyalty were prioritized.[213] In Britain, the network of Japan/Japanese Studies scholars grew, with notable figures such as Sir Hugh Cortazzi and Sir Peter Parker.[214] In Austria, the Japanology department remained one of the most influential departments at the University of Vienna. Japanology in Austria continued to develop within the framework of ethnology, with a strong anthropological focus supported by fieldwork in Japan and close contacts with Japanese institutions. The Japanology Institute in Vienna also had a patron financier from 1938, Baron Takaharu Mitsui (1900-1983).[215] In the Soviet Union, scholarship was heavily influenced by Marxism. In

[211] As the author of this book, I feel that I need to add a probably insignificant but interesting personal note here: I had a Szekler friend from Transylvania (Sfântu Gheorghe) in the early 2000s who always referred to the Japanese as "*the old Yamatos*" (az öreg Jamatók) in everyday conversations.

[212] For the involvement of German Japanology with the National Socialist ideology, see: Herbert Worm: *Japanologie im Nationalsozialismus. Ein Zwischenbericht*. In: Gerhard Krebs, Bernd Martin (ed.): *Formierung und Fall der Achse Berlin-Tokyo*, Iudicum Verlag, München, 1994, pp. 153-186.

[213] Ricky W. Law: *Transnational Nazism: Ideology and Culture in German-Japanese Relations*, 1919–1936, Cambridge University Press, 2019. pp. 267-268.

[214] For the history of British Japanology, see: Hugh Cortazzi and Peter Kornicki (eds.): *Japanese Studies in Britain: A Survey and History*, Renaissance Books, 2016.

[215] The Japanese industrialist, acting on behalf of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, approached countries friendly to Japan to promote Japan-focused research in Vienna, Prague, and Rome. Mitsui had previously promised to establish a Japanese institute at the University of Vienna during the Austrofascist era, though this plan was only implemented

Czechoslovakia, there was a strong focus on linguistics in Japanology.[216] In the USA, the study of Japan during the prewar and immediate postwar periods was first driven by the need to understand the 'enemy,' and later by the goal of securing Japan as a 'reliable ally'.[217]

Temple interior, Kyoto, c. 1900 (ÖNB)

As Franziska Seraphim notes, World War II interrupted Japanology in all European countries, and it was not until the 1950s and later that Japanology was re-established at the universities with little changes in approach and outlook. The focus of Japanology rested on language,[218] linguistics and translations of mainly medieval and modern literature. In 1956, Japanese Studies was established as a separate specialization at the Institute of Oriental Studies at the University of Warsaw, Poland, on the initiative of Professor Wiesław Kotański. The research expanded into various fields, including religion, philosophy, Japanese history, and culture. (It is important to note that this research was pioneering at the time, as Japanese culture was largely unknown in

during the National Socialist period. As part of the Takahara-Mitsui Foundation, the Japanese baron financed the institute, its library, and faculty salaries.

[216] P.A. George (ed.): *Japanese studies : changing global profile*. Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2010. pp. 6-7.; Tomáš Gecko: *The Founding Generation of Japanese Scholars in the Czech Lands (1918–1968): Social Structure, the Academic Field, and Generational Dynamics.* Archiv Orientální 87, 537-567. 2019; Tomáš Gecko: *How the Prague School of Japanese Scholars Benefited from Technology Transfer.* In: ICON: Journal of the International Committee for the History of Technology 25, no 2. (2020): pp. 131-147.

[217] P.A. George (ed.): *Japanese studies : changing global profile*. Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2010. pp. 8. (This book also explores the historical situation of Japanese Studies in South and Southeast Asia.)

[218] For a short historical overview of Japanese language teaching, see: Sambuichi, C. R., & Sambuichi, E. A. (2025). *Japanese Language Teaching: historical milestones*. Educação & Realidade [Education & Reality], 49. https://doi.org/10.1590/2175-6236136124vs01

Poland.)[219]

In the 1960s, two major directives inspired and guided European studies of Japan, particularly in the fields of cultural and social disciplines. One emphasized the necessity of a dual approach, combining Japanology with another discipline and encouraging collaboration with neighboring fields. The other directive stressed the importance of a thorough command of Japanese sources, research, and orientations.[220] Since the 1970s, there have been continuous efforts, with limited success, to transform Japanology – an exotic and eccentric field modeled after disciplines like Egyptology and Assyriology – into the more open and modern, social-science-oriented realm of Japan/Japanese Studies [221] During this period, three strategies were formulated to address the 'impossible expectation that Japanologists know everything about Japan'. The first was to narrowly define Japanology as the study of language and literature. The second was to position Japanology as an auxiliary discipline, with Japanologists serving as purveyors of specialized knowledge to other fields. The third thought was to abandon Japanology altogether in favor of Japanese Studies. The latter is usually understood as a discipline that covers Sociology, Social and Cultural Anthropology, Media Studies, Social Psychology, Political Science and Economics.[222] Ultimately, while Japanese Studies gained prominence in Europe by the 2020s, Japanology has not been entirely discarded.[223] The distinction between Japanology and Japanese Studies is not always straightforward, as reflected in the names of scientific institutions and university departments, especially in France, Germany and Eastern Europe. Here, the term Japanology remains widely used and deeply embedded, even though it often suggests a methodologically outdated field. The terms *Japanstudien* in German and *études japonaises* in French, are relatively recent coinages for Japanese studies. Yet, these newer terms have not fully replaced the older names, *Japanologie* or *Japanistik* in Germany and *Japanologie* in France.[224]

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[219] Iwona Kordzińska-Nawrocka: *History of Japanese Studies at the University of Warsaw.* In: Unique or universal? Japan and its Contribution to World Civilization. Volume 1. 2023. p. 52.
[220] Adriana Boscaro, Franco Gatti, Massimo Raveri (Ed.) : *Rethinking Japan Vol 2 Social Sciences, Ideology and Thought*, Routledge, 1995. p . 120.
[221] Franziska Seraphim: *Japanese Studies in Europe* In: Japanese Bibliography Columbia University, Compiled by Henry Smith, August 1990 (revised in 2003).
https://web.archive.org/web/20221205051312/http://www.columbia.edu/~hds2/BIB95/ch05.htm (accessed: 2023 Aug.)
[222] Ching Lin Pang: *Negotiating Identity In Contemporary Japan*. Routledge, 2000. p. 21.
[223] Adriana Boscaro, Franco Gatti, Massimo Raveri (Ed.) : *Rethinking Japan Vol 2 Social Sciences, Ideology and Thought*, Routledge, 1995. p . 120.
[224] Hugh Cortazzi and Peter Kornicki (eds.): *Japanese Studies in Britain: A Survey and History*, Renaissance Books, 2016., pp 28.

Some distinguish between two different traditions regarding the focal origins of Japan/Japanese Studies. Savitri Vishwanathan argues that the philological focus can be attributed to Europe, while the social science orientation is linked to the USA. He asserts that there was a strong knowledge base of the Japanese language in Europe, which led to the publication of dictionaries, grammar books, and bibliographies. This provided fertile ground for translations, textual interpretations, and various compilations on history, literature, religion, and more, eventually expanding into research in the social sciences and other fields. This is how Savitri Vishwanathan interprets the development of Japanese Studies in Britain, Germany, France, Russia, and Eastern European countries.[225]

In 1980, Jiří Václav Neustupný (1933-2015), a Czech–Australian linguist and professor at Monash University, who was a key figure in Japanology and sociolinguistics, introduced the concept of shifting paradigms between Japanology and Japanese Studies.[226] He described the 'Japanology paradigm' as one that emerged when the study of Japan was largely free from instrumental motivations, such as economic, political, or military interests. During this time, the primary focus was on areas like philology, pre-modern history, religion, and ethnography. Only a small group of scholars were engaged in the field, with their attention directed toward 'exotic and oriental societies and cultures'. Specialization occurred more along regional lines than disciplinary ones. The other concept, the 'Japanese Studies paradigm', emerged as Japan's growing international significance made the study of Japan increasingly instrumental both within and outside academia. Research in Japanese Studies became more valuable and relevant to fields such as politics, social policies, and economics. Specialization shifted toward various disciplines, such as history, politics, and sociology, with a growing number of scholars entering the field. Drawing from Neustupný, the Japanese Studies paradigm was characterized by a generally positive view of Japan and was heavily influenced by Nihonjinron theories, which were widely accepted both in academic circles and in the public sphere.[227] Nevertheless, their standing within academic circles was not particularly high, with the exception of the philological recognition. Japanology courses in some European (especially post-Soviet Eastern European) universities in the 1980s and 1990s

[225] P.A. George (ed.): *Japanese studies : changing global profile*. Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2010. p. 6.
[226] J. V. Neustupný: *On Paradigms in The Study Of Japan*. Social Analysis: The International Journal of Anthropology No. 5/6, Japanese Society: Reappraisals and New Directions (December 1980), pp. 20-28.
[227] Kaori Okano, Yoshio Sugimoto (ed.): *Rethinking Japanese Studies – Eurocentrism and the Asia-Pacific Region*. Routledge, 2018. p. 2.

might be characterized ironically with terms like *'Orchideenfach*', '*underwater basket weaving course*', or '*Mickey Mouse course*'.[228] Despite some encouraging trends, many problems remain in relation to Japanology and Japan/Japanese Studies. First, Japan is still so exoticized and supposedly irrelevant to the thoroughly Eurocentric university establishment that state support for Japanology and Japan/Japanese Studies is limited. Second, while all kinds of academic disciplines come together under the umbrella term Japanology and Japan/Japanese Studies, there is a considerable gap between these "general" disciplines with their various theories and methodologies and the low interest in applying and unifying these methods in Japan Studies. By the same token, scholars of Japan have not been able to make an impact on the Euro-centrality of the "general" disciplines. Third, the lack of communication among scholars within and among European countries as well as with their American counterparts is only slowly being alleviated.[229] There are additional inherent issues in Japanology and Japan/Japanese Studies, as Aike P. Rots aptly describes it:

> "*In Japanese studies, Japan is a given. Institutionally speaking, Japanese studies is a well-established academic discipline, with its own journals[230] and international associations, and study programs at major universities worldwide. Unlike most other academic disciplines, however, it is defined neither by a scientific method nor a body of theory, but only by its subject matter: things Japanese. Haiku poetry, Shingon cosmology, LDP ideology, and Studio Ghibli imagery have nothing in common, cannot be interpreted through the same theoretical lens, and are approached by means of different methodological toolkits. Yet they are all studied at Japanese studies departments, which persist not because of the innovative character or societal relevance of their research but, more prosaically, because of comparatively high student numbers and a stable supply of Japanese funding. (...) Japanese studies continues to exist as a bounded academic field, but it is*

[228] The German concept of an "orchid subject" refers to an academic discipline or field of study that is considered niche, exotic, or specialised. It's often taught in only a few universities or has a relatively small number of students. The term is metaphorical, likening these unique subjects to rare and delicate orchid flowers. Meanwhile, in the UK, "Mickey Mouse degrees" are often perceived as lacking practical application in the job market. Critics contend that students who invest their time and money in such degrees might face restricted career opportunities compared to those pursuing more conventional programs. The Hungarian term for such courses is "ruhatár-büfé szak" (cloakroom-buffet course).

[229] Franziska Seraphim: *Japanese Studies in Europe* In: Japanese Bibliography Columbia University, Compiled by Henry Smith, August 1990 (revised in 2003).
https://web.archive.org/web/20221205051312/http://www.columbia.edu/~hds2/BIB95/ch05.htm (accessed: 2023 Aug.)

[230] For the historicization of the journals currently operating in the field in 2024, see: Edward Boyle: *Publishing for Global Japanese Studies: Trends and future prospects*. In: Trends in Japanese Studies Volume 1, Number 1, pp. 1-7, 2024

characterised by a high degree of self-containment and isolation, and little productive interaction with other disciplines."[231]

We can add to the above what Geoffrey Bownas, a Japanologist from Sheffield, wrote in 1966 as a definition of the prototype of a Japanologist:

"*(...) the one-man band playing every known Japanese melody on all the instruments. Huddling alone, with little contact with other Orientalists, much less other departments in his university, the Japanologist teacher has been forced to be the Jack of all trades – to cover, single-handed, all the transitions in language from the seventh century AD to the contemporary colloquial; to be conversant with the unbroken flow of literature from these fourteen centuries; to give a considered, scholarly opinion on everything under the rising sun from philosophy, religion, art and ceramics to economics, politics, social psychology and automotive manufacture.*"[232]

Drawing on the observations of other scholars, Aviad E. Raz offers an insightful explanation of the role of Japanologists and Japan experts. According to this view, Japanologists "*all-too-readily assemble among themselves as 'Japan specialists', rather than as members of distinct intellectual constituencies*".[233] They are caught in a dual role: on the one hand, they are 'interpreters of the secrets of the Japanese essence', while on the other, they are committed to preserving the 'mystery of Japan'. This is because Japanology has been largely shaped by the search for the 'ultimate signifier', the 'Japanese spirit', and its national character. Consequently, Japanologists reinforce the stereotypical image of Japan by preserving Japanology's paradigmatic approach, myths, and Orientalist perspectives.[234] In addition to this, a Japanese scholar of Victorian literature, Masao Miyoshi summarized the lineage of American Japanologists as follows:

"*The lineage of the Japanologists in America began with the religious and industrial missionaries who went to the Far East to civilize and democratize the barbarians.*

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[231] Aike P. Rots: *The Elusive Adjective: Overcoming Methodological Nationalism in Japanese Studies.* Essay written for the Toshiba International Foundation 30th Anniversary Essay Contest, 2019.
[232] Geoffrey Bownas: *Japanese Journeys Writings and Recollections*. Chapter: *From Japanology to Japanese Studies – Inaugural lecture Delivered on 14 December 1966 in The University of Sheffield.* Brill, 2005, pp. 236.
[233] Aviad E. Raz: *Marketing National and Self Appearances: Cool and Cute in J-Culture*. In: Ulla Haselstein, Irmela Hijiya-Krischnereit, Catrin Gersdorf, Elena Giannoulis (ed.): *The Cultural Career of Coolness – Discourses and Practices in European Antiquity, the United States, and Japan*. Lexington Books, 2013, p. 258.
[234] Aviad E. Raz: *Marketing National and Self Appearances: Cool and Cute in J-Culture*. In: Ulla Haselstein, Irmela Hijiya-Krischnereit, Catrin Gersdorf, Elena Giannoulis (ed.): *The Cultural Career of Coolness – Discourses and Practices in European Antiquity, the United States, and Japan*. Lexington Books, 2013, pp. 257-258.

Then the imperial evangelists of civilization took over the role of teachers and advisors on their return home around the turn of the century. Their godsons, who had been dormant for a while, were mobilized into a cadre of interpreters and administrators during the Second World War and the postwar years. A noticeable advance in Japanology was made by this generation of Occupation-trained specialists, and their impact on scholarship remains both powerful and definitive. Because of the historical circumstances of missionary and conquest, this genealogy has no shortage of those uncritical (or even unaware) of their own ethnocentric and hegemonic impulses. "[235]

A picture of a Japanese man under a huge parasol by Wilhelm Burger, c. 1870. (ÖNB)

According to Keizo Nagatani and Akio Tanaka, in the historiography of image-building between Japan and the West, the images they hold of each other have largely remained unchanged. This situation can be partly attributed to the presence of Japanology. Along with journalists and politicians ("*the chief culprits*") who are responsible for perpetuating static images of Japan, there are academics, who, unintentionally or otherwise, propagate the canonical observations of early Japanologists that Japan is fundamentally an antithesis[236] of Western civilization. In the orientalist "contributions" of Japanology (with the help of journalism and politics), Japan is attributed with qualities that are diametrically opposite of what supposedly characterised the West: while the West is

[235] Masao Miyoshi: *Against the Native Grain: The Japanese Novel and the 'Postmodern' West.* In: Off Center: Power and Culture Relations Between Japan and the United States (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 67.
[236] Ian Littlewood: *Japan*. In: Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen (eds.), Imagology: The Cultural Construction and Literary Representation of national characters. A critical survey. Brill, 2007. pp. 200-202.

conceived as muscular, rational, and progressive, Japan remained feminine, emotional, and backward. Moreover, there is an ironic twist to this, since the characterization of Japan was not just a product of a one-way, single-minded European imposition: the Japanologist discourse had complicit partners in Japan, too, who were eager to share their views on Japanese uniqueness.[237] When one looks for a defense from Japanologists against accusations leveled at their field, one may come across the thoughts of Geoffrey Bownas from 1966:

> "*Let me try to delimit what I understand by the term Japanology. The word implies a sweep of studies, at times almost pretentious in its breath: it includes every aspect of Japan, its people, its history; its literature and language; its religions, thought, art and the rest. It is inward-looking, a discipline to itself. Broad-based and self-contained, gathering under its wing every chicken in a numerous brood of studies, it has driven off the inquisitive outsider with its difficult demands and its often unnecessary exoticisms. But, whatever its effects, I would not put into disrepute either the study itself or its exponents; in its time and of its day, Japanology was the best, in fact, the only possible form of study of Japan, and to decry Japanology would be to discard a corpus of material often still of great value as an essential basis for specialized study. (...) In its worst manifestations, it is sometimes a little amateurish. (...) Often it has been Western-centered, and, at its worst, Japanology projects every Western prejudice or value into its interpretations; it looks in on and down on, with the eyes of the outsider, and in those eyes it is often hard to discern even the faintest glimmer of Nipponese knowledge or the insight born of sympathy. (...) But, at its best, based on a thorough knowledge of the language and original sources, Japanology has everything to teach us. The names of Satow, Alcock, Aston, Gubbins, Brinkley, Dickins, Mitford and Chamberlain – the first generation of Japanologists – are not yet, nor should they be, forgotten. As scholar pioneers, the Japanologists gained a deserved reputation from the Japanese. (...) by about the end of the nineteenth century, Japanese scholarship was beginning to develop soundly on a modern scientific basis.*"[238]

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[237] Keizo Nagatani, Akio Tanaka: *Perception Gaps: An Introduction* (Chapter 1) In: Japan and the West: The Perception Gap byKeizo Nagatani, David W. Edgington, Routledge, 2020.

[238] Geoffrey Bownas: *Japanese Journeys Writings and Recollections*. Chapter: *From Japanology to Japanese Studies – Inaugural lecture Delivered on 14 December 1966 in The University of Sheffield.* Brill, 2005, pp. 233-234.

The modern definition of Japanese Studies was provided by Ogawa and Seaton in 2020: "*the interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary study of Japan in the social sciences and humanities, in which analysis of Japan in domestic, international or comparative contexts using both Japanese and non-Japanese sources is disseminated to an international audience*".[239] They conceptualised six different eras of Japan Studies: 1. Early Imperial (to c. 1905); 2. Late Imperial (to c. 1945); 3. Postwar (to 1960s); 4. Internationalisation (from 1970s to 1980s); 5. Globalisation (from 1990s to 2010s); 6. New Frontiers (2020s onwards). Philip Seaton provided excellent and useful tables that summarise the prevailing characteristics of Japanese Studies in each era:[240]

Early Imperial (to c. 1905)		
	Non-Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students	Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students
Outside Japan	Japan research is largely the preservation of 'amateurs' with some experience in Japan. Authorities on the distant, mysterious Orient. Development of oriental learned societies.	Japanese travel abroad to learn from the West; treated there as 'representative living examples' of the culture.
Inside Japan	The colonial adventurer or expat; the eccentric who has 'gone native'; invited foreign experts (お雇い外国人).	Objects of anthropological study introduced by Japanologists to their domestic audience.
Late Imperial (to c. 1945)		
	Non-Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students	Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students
Outside Japan	Beginnings of Japanese language teaching in Western universities. Shift from 'understanding the culture' to 'understanding the enemy/ally' amidst increasing confrontation and ultimately war.	Handful of Japanese language teachers at Western universities; mass language education in Japan's colonies.
Inside Japan	The scaling down of the Western presence as war approaches; Japan's imperial power status and Pan-Asianism bring Asian students/intellectuals to Japan	Intellectuals (e.g. Kyoto School) ended up supporting and disseminating nationalist positions on the road to war.
Postwar (to 1960s)		
	Non-Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students	Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students
Outside Japan	Pioneers of area studies at Western	Era of restrictions on travel abroad by

[239] Akihiro Ogawa, Philip Seaton (ed.): *New Frontiers in Japanese Studies*. Routledge, 2020.
[240] https://philipseaton.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/20230418-Intro-to-J-Studies-Week-2.pdf (accessed: 2023 Aug.)

	universities. Professionalization of Japanese Studies. Cultural interpreters whose training and perspectives are rooted in the war years.	ordinary Japanese. Japan is largely represented abroad by prewar migrants and their descendants.
Inside Japan	Occupation era workers, and post-occupation area studies pioneers in Japan for fieldwork.	An introspective era as Japan debates defeat and seeks new intellectual directions in the postwar.
Internationalisation (1970s to 1980s)		
	Non-Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students	Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students
Outside Japan	Proliferation of Japanese Studies journals and academic societies. Researchers are authorities on a distant but fast-growing economy. Pioneers of area studies in Asia look to Japan as a model.	Pioneers of autonomous study abroad; expatriate researchers teaching language and/or the social sciences and humanities. Subordinate status as 'foreign lecturers'.
Inside Japan	Mainly Western language teachers who also write on Japanese society/culture. Subordinate status as 'foreign lecturers'.	Nihonijnron discourse; domestic interpreters of the secrets of Japanese success whose voices reach abroad.
Globalization (1990s to 2010s)		
	Non-Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students	Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students
Outside Japan	Holding the reins of academic power in Japanese Studies during the neoliberal educational era of rankings and 'impact factor journals'.	Emergence of the discipline-based Japanese researcher making their career abroad. Breakthrough of some into management.
Transnational	Massive increase in connectivity in the Internet era. Erosion of distinctions between 'Japanese' and 'foreign'. Increasing numbers of multicultural, multilingual researchers build international research careers with a focus on Japan and its international environment.	
Inside Japan	Interest in pop culture displaces interest in economic secrets of success as Japan grows into a major study abroad destination. Emergence of the discipline-based researcher making their career in Japan.	Japan-based scholars as international voices either via translation or publishing their work online (mainly) in English. Political and financial backing for 'Japanese Studies in Japan'.
New Frontiers (2020s onwards)		
	Non-Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students	Japanese Researchers, Teachers, Students
Outside Japan	Diffusion of centres of power to scholars in countries outside the West, particularly in Asia. De-Westernization of Japanese Studies. Increased collaboration between Japanese Studies and the natural sciences.	The internationally mobile scholar whose reputation and seniority are increasingly unchained from nationality.
Transnational	Japanese Studies becomes ever more multicultural, multilingual, interdisciplinary and transnational in nature. Japan's role in combating climate	

	change (environment), and coping with an aging society and migration (human mobility) emerge as core issues.	
Inside Japan	The internationally mobile scholar whose reputation and seniority are increasingly unchained from nationality. Breakthrough of some into management.	Japanese Studies reoriented towards global rather than domestic issues. Deepened relationships with Asia. Increased collaboration with researchers from the natural sciences.

The number of students in the field of Japanology is on the rise in Hungary. As a result, Hungarian universities are tailoring their Japanology / Japanese Studies programs to prospective students, albeit with an unfavourable consequence of *weeb and/or Japanophile incubation*.[241] This is due to the undeniable fact that the majority of applicants are passionate, conditioned, and uncritical Japanophiles, as well as ardent consumers of Japanese and East Asian pop culture.[242] By enticing these young students into Japanese or 'East-Asian Studies' programs, Hungarian universities can significantly bolster their income. (One peculiar manifestation of this type of *enticement* outside of Hungary can be observed on the homepage of the Department of Asian Languages and Literatures at the Romanian Babes-Bolyai University, where they openly promote their department with two overly exoticist slogans: "*Discover the fascination of the Far East! Experience the exoticism of Asian culture!"*[243]) Moreover, when it comes to East-Asian Studies departments at universities in Hungary, the rising number of tuition-paying applicants – most of whom are ardent admirers of East-Asian pop cultures – combined with generous per-head support from the Hungarian government and financial backing from Japan, Korea, and primarily China, has led these departments to adopt a so-called *customer service model*, where both students and the foreign government-related institutions providing support are treated as customers. In this model, the 'customers' must be kept *amused and happy* for the university to profit. Even so, this shift brings inevitable consequences: it signals the decline of universities, or at least the 'stupor' of their financially successful 'limbs' – the Japanese, Korean, and Chinese Studies

[241] A weeb is a term widely used in social media and in internet-based discourses (both as a derogatory term and for in-group self-identification) for a non-Japanese person who is so obsessed with Japanese culture that they wish they were actually Japanese.

[242] The situation appears to be similar globally, suggesting that it is not unique to Hungary. In 2022, drawing on his extensive teaching experience at various Australian institutions, Thomas Baudinette reflected on the challenges faced by many students who are Japanese media fans in critically engaging with Japanese society, language, and culture. He argues that their immersion in the fantasies perpetuated and reinforced by an uncritical Japanophile narrative environment has significantly hindered their ability to adopt a more critical perspective. Thomas Baudinette. '*Pure Invention or Pure Fantasy? A Critical Review of a Popular History of Transnational Japanese Media Fandom*' Journal of the Society for Asian Humanities 2022. p. 361. https://doi.org/10.3316/informit.943064906261933

[243] https://lett.ubbcluj.ro/departamente/department-of-asian-languages-and-literatures/?lang=en (accessed: 2023 Sept.)

departments.[244] As a result, this leads to a serious degradation of incentives to prioritize academic accuracy, reason, critical inquiry, and academic freedom. A quick glance at the count of new students in 2023 who have submitted their applications to study at one of the two universities in Hungary, where Japanese Studies programs are available, echoes the ongoing validation of Japan's popularity, primarily stemming from the widely consumed Japanese pop-, consumer-, and subculture. Out of the 1014 applications received, 280 students were enrolled in their first year in 2023.[245] (In contrast, Polish Studies, for example, is taught at 2 universities in Budapest. In 2023, only one will be starting, as there were no applicants at the other University. The number of admitted students starting their Polish Studies in Hungary in 2023 is 11. Seeing this number, a Hungarian Polonist expressed his concerns about the future of Polish Studies in Hungary: "*There should be Polonists among the humanities and social scientists. It is nonsense that we are here in Central Europe and (...) if we continue like this, there will be no more of them…*"[246])

As for the US, enrollment in various Japanese language courses at Universities is popular, and it looks like in recent years, more American students are learning Japanese than Chinese and Korean combined.[247] On the other hand, the situation regarding the level of popularity of Japan/Japanese Studies might be a different story in the States. Some say that the field is declining as a subject, in tandem with the downturn in the Japanese economy.[248] In a panel titled the "*Death of Japanese Studies"* at the 2019 Association of Asian Studies (AAS) meeting in Denver, Colorado, a discussion was held on shrinking departments, the lack of tenure-track lines, reduced interest in the Japanese language, and the competition from Chinese and Korean studies.[249] A not-so-subtle

[244] In medical terms, stupor refers to a state of near-unconsciousness or insensibility, metaphorically implying that these departments, while still functioning, are no longer intellectually vibrant.
[245] Official statistics of the Hungarian Ministry of Education, 2023
https://www.felvi.hu/felveteli/ponthatarok_statisztikak/friss_statisztikak/!FrissStatisztikak/index.php/friss_statisztikak/szakonkent?filters%5Bsta_iin_id%5D=12&filters%5Bsta_kar_id%5D=243;
https://www.felvi.hu/felveteli/ponthatarok_statisztikak/friss_statisztikak/!FrissStatisztikak/index.php/friss_statisztikak/szakonkent?filters%5Bsta_iin_id%5D=17&filters%5Bsta_kar_id%5D=278 (accessed: 2023 Sept.)
[246]https://www.facebook.com/Qfajka/posts/pfbid0xBW9txhcP4Ni9MUvGSqZbeS9XLJwuji461fxZjiWh6QVTGxUKjExCvT26LLkt348l (accessed: 2023 Sept.)
[247] *Why fewer university students are studying Mandarin*, article, The Economist Online, 2023 Aug.
https://www.economist.com/china/2023/08/24/why-fewer-university-students-are-studying-mandarin (accessed: 2023 Aug.)
[248] *Stagnation in Japan Studies Abroad.* My Vision, No. 48 July 2020, Nippon Institute for Research Advancement.
https://english.nira.or.jp/papers/my_vision/2020/07/stagnation-in-japan-studies-abroad.html (accessed: 2023 Aug). As early as 2010, Kazuhiko Komatsu argued that Japanese Studies was in decline in the West, while simultaneously on the rise in Asia. P.A. George (ed.): *Japanese studies : changing global profile*. Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2010. p. 13.
[249] Grace En-Yi TING: *Negativity and Hope, or Addressing Gender and Race in Japanese Studies*. In: Gender and Sexuality, Vol. 15. Center for Gender Studies at the International Christian University, pp. 67-81.

signal of the last vital signs of Japanology – or Japan/Japanese Studies – in Europe came in a 2025 book[250] by the Austrian Japanologist Sabine Frühstück, in which she called Sepp Linhart the "*letzten Homo Academicus Universalis der Japanforschung*" ("*the last universal academic of Japanese studies*"). Obviously, there are numerous problems with such labeling. Historically, the "*last of …*" trope conveys nostalgia and the anxiety of loss, but it also functions as an empty cliché. It is not a descriptive label but a performative act: it elevates someone into a monument – a gesture that a living scholar in his eighties and with a healthy sense of self, would hardly welcome with great enthusiasm. Apart from the good intention behind the labeling, the real issue Japanology faces today is *not* the absence or historical fading of "*universal academics*" but the lack of genuine interdisciplinarity and critical self-awareness. What the field needs least is a frantic, ad hoc kind of unstructured universality that treats the diverse facets of *things Japanese* as methodologically equivalent – or worse, approaches them without any methodological reflection at all. There is also little need to further a narrow, self-congratulatory, grant-hungry research culture whose value rarely extends beyond its own academic echo chambers. Labeling someone "the last" while they are still alive is an avoidable act of premature canonization. It is like freezing this respectable old man in a glacier – turning him into the Ötzi[251] of Japanology. All in all, this label distorts rather than honors his achievements. It also signals a bleak future for the upper echelons of Japanology: in their pretense of standing aside from the deathbed of the field, they overlook one crucial point: they will be the ones weeping the hardest over the death of the very quasi-discipline their own complacency helped to embalm.

If we take a look at the situation in Australia, Japanese language and culture courses are offered in more than 20 universities in 2020, and the past twenty years have seen stability in terms of growing enrolments in Japanese language and culture courses. Yet, there is an imbalance between the high number of students taking one or two Japanese language classes and the relatively low number of students doing a full major in Australia.[252] The situation of Japan/Japanese studies in the UK is quite strong relative to a lot of other European countries and to the US. In terms of undergraduate student numbers, there are about 500 students that start a B.A. course involving some

[250] Sepp Linhart: *Unbekannte Geschichte(n) Japans: Sozialhistorische und interkulturelle Betrachtungen 1841–1912*, Mandelbaum Verlag, Vienna, 2025, Introduction by Sabine Frühstück

[251] Ötzi, the "Iceman" is a naturally preserved Copper Age mummy discovered in 1991 in the Ötztal Alps (Austria/Italy).

[252] Rebecca Suter: *The current state of Japanese Studies in Australia in 2020*. Asian Studies Association of Australia https://asaa.asn.au/the-current-state-of-japanese-studies-in-australia-in-2020/ (accessed: 2023 Aug.)

Japan-related element in the UK every year, whether as a major or some kind of minor element, and that number has stayed fairly strong. Yet it seems that the shape of Japan/Japanese studies in the UK is similarly changing. One example is the decline in the number of Japan Study Centres in UK universities. Another noteworthy change is that the number of Masters' students (in the UK, the Masters' degree forms a bridge from undergraduate to postgraduate and research roles) has begun to steadily decline.[253] In Germany, the interest in Japan as a subject of research is very strong, but at the same time, Japan/Japanese Studies have taken on a different form from previous area studies. Rather than Japan itself being the sole focus of study, the country is treated as a case study, and research is conducted including an Asia-focused transnational perspective, where Japan Studies centres are integrated into Asia-focused departments.[254] In Spain, Japan/Japanese studies began with a delay, but over the past three decades, it has made significant progress within universities. Presently, eight universities provide programs focused on East Asian studies, including Japan/Japanese studies, with an equivalent number engaged in research projects. The field has extended its reach from humanities to social sciences, spanning various research groups, centres, and universities. Nevertheless, the sustainability of Japan/Japanese studies faces challenges due to concerns about institutional support and funding in the future.[255]

We should not overlook the discernible presence of both explicit and implicit Japanophilia among certain circles of Western scholars engaged with Japan, including some Japanologists, sociologists, art historians, linguists, anthropologists, geographers, and historians. Among these academics, certain individuals exhibit a tendency and susceptibility to depict Japan only in a favourable light. Subconscious motivations may also underlie their inclinations: those desiring invitations to work in Japan feel compelled to showcase their research positively in front of their Japanese colleagues. This presumption is supported by a harsh assessment offered by an American professor who had taught in Japan:

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[253] *Stagnation in Japan Studies Abroad.* My Vision, No. 48 July 2020, Nippon Institute for Research Advancement. https://english.nira.or.jp/papers/my_vision/2020/07/stagnation-in-japan-studies-abroad.html (accessed: 2023 Aug.)
[254] *Stagnation in Japan Studies Abroad.* My Vision, No. 48 July 2020, Nippon Institute for Research Advancement. https://english.nira.or.jp/papers/my_vision/2020/07/stagnation-in-japan-studies-abroad.html (accessed: 2023 Aug.)
[255] Blai Guarné and Iwasa Takuro: *Japanese Studies in Spain: A Growing Academic Field.* In: 世界の日本研究 / Japanese Studies Around the World 2020 pp. 6–36.; It would be interesting to see comparisons with the situations in Asian countries, such as Indonesia. Further reading for the latter: Himawan Pratama and Antonius R. Pujo Purnomo: *Japanese Studies in Indonesia*. New Frontiers in Japanese Studies, Routledge, 2020. pp. 75-88.; France is excluded from this summary, as the author was unable to find an up-to-date overview of the field. For further reading on Japan/Japanese Studies in France in the 2010s, see: Josef A. Kyburz: *Trends and Future Prospects of Japan Studies as an Academic Discipline*. In: P.A. George (ed.): Japanese studies: changing global profile. Jawaharlal Nehru University, 2010. p. 23.

"*To perform his or her own work effectively, the typical foreign Japanologist has to join and play the game by Japanese rules that eschew 'unacceptable' areas or degrees of criticism. (...) there is a strange propensity among American Japanologists to feel one-sidedly positive about Japan (...) if you're a foreigner who is too critical about Japan, your sources of information, funding, or friends dry up.*"[256]

It might be well assumed that Western researchers who portray Japan in a predominantly positive manner are more likely to be warmly received and treated in Japan compared to those who employ critical undertones. When it comes to conducting ethical and objective (non-Japanophile) research on Japan, unfortunately, very few scholars think like Klemen Senica, a Slovenian scholar from the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Arts, Ljubljana. Senica writes:

"*No one wants his/her article or monograph to be seen as sliding into the so-called nihonjinron ideology. However, it seems that English-language studies on Japanese colonialism are prone to certain shin-nihonjinron.*" [257]

Even fewer scholars are conscious of the need to be cautious in scholarly interpretations about *things Japanese*, like Robert Thomas Tierney, an American professor in the East Asian Languages and Cultures Department at the University of Illinois. In one of his books, Tierney aptly addresses this responsibility:

"*In this book, I attempt to navigate between the Scylla of making a fetish of Japan's uniqueness and the Charybdis of reducing it to an application of a universal rule.*" [258]

Fortunately, self-reflectivity is occasionally emerging among Japanologists, too. As Marilyn Ivy wrote:

"*Japanology is something to question; I always resist being primarily identified as a Japanologist (rather than an anthropologist, despite the problems inherent in that disciplinary identification) because of its orientalist associations and its constricted purview*".[259]

Similar issues were also addressed by Prof. Chris Goto-Jones:

"*For me, Modern Japan Studies is a profoundly and intricately discomforting field.*

[256] Ivan P. Hall: *Cartels of the Mind: Japan's Intellectual Closed Shop* W. W. Norton & Company, 1998, p. 169.
[257] Klemen Senica: *Great Japanese Empire: Bon voyage, the postcolonial approach*. Presentation at the Japan Foundation, Budapest, PhD workshop in East and Central Europe, 2013. p. 2.
[258] Robert Thomas Tierney: *Tropics of Savagery: The Culture of Japanese Empire in Comparative Frame*, University of California Press, London, 2010, p. 201.
[259] Marilyn Ivy: *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan, University of Chicago Press*, 1995. p. 60.

Indeed, (...) it is precisely its discomforting nature that makes it so fascinating (for me) and, I would argue, so potentially important in today's academe. (...) I believe this is 'potential' because (for various intellectual, historical, political and institutional reasons) Modern Japan Studies does not always even aim to make a substantive theoretical contribution to our universe of knowledge, and this is because (for understandable reasons) its primary concern is often Japan itself, as a kind of hermetically sealed entity or 'enclave of knowledge.' (...) I believe that Modern Japan Studies is often in denial about (or is institutionally denied) its discomforting nature – that is: it both knows and doesn't know the discomfort that it can cause – and that it needs to confront this denial and even to relish the discomfort, the dissonance that it can cause in the Humanities and Social Sciences at large. Conversely, the mainstream disciplines and institutions of the Humanities and Social Sciences need to overcome their denial that Japan exists in the modern world at all."[260]

Harumi Befu, a professor emeritus of anthropology and a pioneer in Japanese studies, who challenged stereotypes about Japanese people and their culture, held the following opinion about certain Western scholars researching Japan:

"*(...) Western scholars are predisposed to see Japan through rosy glasses, making them susceptible to accepting a model that depicts Japan in a favourable light from the standpoint of Western values. At a deeper, unconscious level, anyone, especially if he has to deal with Japanese closely and has to return to Japan for professional reasons, would want his Japanese colleagues to think well of him. One who propounds a model depicting Japan as well-integrated, harmonious, etc., is more likely to be well received than one whose model presents Japan in an unfavourable light. Thus, there is subconscious motivation to accept the 'official' ideology as the theoretical model. At still another level of analysis, (...) those who study Japan tend to be like Japanese in their personality disposition (...). As Japanese are concerned with harmonious relations, Westerners studying Japan also tend to have the personality disposition that accepts the same ideology.*"[261]

Lastly, a less discussed view should be taken into consideration: the mere fact that

[260] Prof.dr. Chris Goto-Jones: *What is Modern Japan Studies? Towards a constructive critique of epistemic violence.* Oratie uitgesproken door Prof. dr. Chris Goto-Jones bij de aanvaarding van het ambt van op het gebied van het Moderne Japan aan de Universiteit Leiden op 15 juni 2007.

[261] Befu, Harumi: *The Group Model of Japanese Society and an Alternative.* In: Rice Institute Pamphlet – Rice University Studies, 66, no. 1. p. 177. (1980) Rice University: https://hdl.handle.net/1911/63395. (accessed: 2023 Aug)

Japanology or Japan/Japanese Studies are products of racialization, as Atsuko Ueda points out:

> "*The absence of race in previous scholarship is also symptomatic of the archive-centered Japan Studies field. By simply focusing on the object of knowledge, one can completely lose sight of this disavowal. I cannot overemphasize the importance of reinscribing race in our work to critically engage with our field. The very fact that Japan Studies exists in its current form is already a product of racialization. Just as a racialized worldview entered Japan in the Meiji period as a form of science, we too have inherited the structure of the forms of knowledge which are very much implicated in such a framework. We don't have to look too far. Western philosophy presents itself as the "normative philosophy" while 'Japanese philosophy' is merely a yellow version of that. Area Studies, which was produced as the world reorganized itself at the end of World War II with the United States as center, reproduces this framework. If we simply ghettoize ourselves in the 'study of Japan' as an object, without calling attention to how such an object becomes constituted in the first place, and without calling attention to the always already structured raciality inscribed in it, we can only become complicit with this structure of racialization.*"[262]

As the above thoughts clearly demonstrate, there is no doubt that the field of Japanology, or Japan/Japanese Studies, still occupies a deeply-rooted, problematic position in the academic world. It began as a profession long before it could claim the status of a true academic discipline, and even today, its legitimacy as a field of disciplinary study remains debatable. Despite a long history of activity, it still struggles to present itself as a well-defined and highly developed body of scholarship. This is perhaps most evident in the inability to even standardize its name, as the terms Japanology and Japan/Japanese Studies are used interchangeably, reflecting a deeper lack of coherence. The absence of a clear specialization within the field further complicates matters. Many "Japan experts" exhibit more Japanophile enthusiasm than substantive knowledge about their subject. While striving for specialization could elevate its scholarly rigor, it is often seen as a threat by self-proclaimed Japan experts, who prefer to operate in the vague ambiguity that grants them self-authorized power, prestige, and charisma. The reluctance to

[262] Atsuko Ueda: *Language, Nation, Race - Linguistic Reform in Meiji Japan 1868-1912*. University of California Press, 2021. p. 101.

professionalize and specialize has resulted in a situation where Japanology and Japan/Japanese Studies risk becoming what could be described as "*professions of the unprofessional*" or "*professional dilettantism*".[263] Some academic and non-academic Japan experts resist professionalization, fearing it could undermine their authority or limit their ability to maintain ambiguous roles. This ambiguity, straddling the line between "professional" and "lay" practices, is a defining feature of the field, and most of its practitioners show little incentive to clarify or resolve this tension.

The future of Japanology and Japan/Japanese Studies seems precarious unless it embraces a radical transformation. One potential path forward lies in becoming a "profession of proper criticism". By making itself the object of critique, the field could establish a solid theoretical and methodological foundation. Such self-reflexive criticism would allow the field to justify its existence not through blind faith in its importance, but through rigorous intellectual examination of its practices, assumptions, and scope. Unfortunately, the field currently lacks convincing answers to fundamental questions about its raison d'être, leading to the perception that its justification relies more on faith than on a robust intellectual framework. Adding to the complexity is a troubling trend: Japanology and Japan/Japanese Studies are gravitating toward an uncritical, yet highly popular genre of 'religious' Japanophile entertainment. This shift dilutes its scholarly credibility and threatens its position as a university discipline. If Japanology and Japan/Japanese Studies are to survive and thrive, they must confront these challenges head-on. A reinvention centered on critical analysis and intellectual rigor could not only revive the field but also restore its relevance in an academic landscape that demands clear purpose and accountability. Along these lines, a brief examination of the relationship between Japanophilia and behavioral science is warranted.

[263] Joseph A. Schumpeter: *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, Routledge, 2003. p. 147.

Japanese dancers, c. 1900 (Weltmuseum)

Japanophile Circles and Behavioral Science

Through the lens of behavioural science, we can identify several biases inherent to Japanophiles:

- *Confirmation bias*: avoiding negative or critical statements about Japan, often dismissing them as false or malicious. Gravitating towards individuals who share their Japanophile perspective. For instance, Japanophile Facebook groups perpetuate opinions within an artificially constructed information bubble. This self-deception significantly narrows their horizons, and they fail to consider the complete picture, instead engaging in highly limited and manipulated thinking.
- *In-group bias and herd mentality within Japanophile circles*: people tend to align their thoughts, opinions, and behaviours with larger groups, conforming to the crowd or majority. Occasionally, they suppress their inclination for critical thinking.
- *Japanophilia as bounded rationality*: while a fully rational person would need to gather all available information about Japan and meticulously analyse all potential interpretations, this is an unattainable task. Trendsetting Japanophile influencers and Japanophile Japanologist 'experts' are predisposed to offering skewed interpretations.
- *Cognitive dissonance and information avoidance*: negative, critical, or unsettling questions and thoughts about Japan or the Japanese culture are

often disregarded as insignificant.

- *Japanophile 'Japan hands', Japan experts, Japanologists and the Dunning-Kruger effect (illusion of competence)*: individuals with limited knowledge often exhibit heightened confidence in their expertise.
- *Authority bias among Japanophile 'Japan experts' in media appearances*: Japanophiles blindly follow individuals they perceive as authoritative figures. These 'Japan experts' are likely to engage in 'Japansplaining'. The term 'Japansplaining' is coined to describe a rhetorical device similar to 'mansplaining', where someone (often a Westerner) explains Japanese culture or art in a condescending manner. This approach, common in Western discussions of 'things Japanese', frames them as foreign and complex, implying that only 'Japansplainers' can help Westerners understand them properly.[264]
- *FoMo (fear of missing out) effect*: there exists a fear of missing out on something important or enjoyable tied to the escalating consumption of Japanese culture.
- *Illusory truth effect stemming from narratives that stereotype and exoticize Japan*: when people encounter the same incorrect or misleading information repeatedly, they tend to accept it as truth.
- *Bias blind spots among Japanophile Japanologists, opinion leaders, and trendsetters*: individuals are often unaware that their thinking is influenced by biases, prejudices, and other cognitive distortions. While they readily recognize these effects in others, they believe themselves to be exempt from such characteristics.

If unconditional and uncritical Japanophilia is not self-explanatory in public appearances or other works for some, here is a short checklist of how to detect typical red-flag Japanophile tropes and phrases:

- excessive references to "*traditional Japanese culture*"
- recurring use or recycling of the fairy-tale–like expression "*Land of the Rising Sun*" wherever a *simple reference to Japan* would suffice
- over-mystification of *Orientalism* and emphasis on distance, e.g., "*distant, wonderful island country*"

[264] Martin de la Iglesia: *Japanese Art in the Contact Zone: Between Orientalism and 'Japansplaining'*. In: Migrations in Visual Culture, Ljubljana, Ljubljana University Press, (2018). p. 52. DOI: 10.4312/9789610601166

- unconscious overuse of the 19th century term "*Far East*"
- pairing exclusively positive words, like *"attraction"* and "*love"* with Japan (potentially signaling a fetishized or exoticizing affection)
- unfitting, contextually unrelated adoption of Japanese words and phrases before an uncomprehending audience as a means of self-aggrandizement or to feign expertise

Criticism and Pitfalls of Japanophile-Criticism

To address potential counter-arguments, particularly regarding the previously mentioned critiques of Japanophilia, the author of this book offers a brief, self-reflective critique. The act of conveying Japanophilia in a stringent and pronounced manner might be perceived as a manifestation of cultural elitism. Some readers could interpret the approach here as insinuating that individuals with an interest in Japanese culture are being characterised as insensitive or inattentive. Some might think that this kind of criticism intentionally dissuades people from exploring Japan. Nonetheless, the aforementioned points are not presented to quell cultural curiosity; rather, they encourage a deliberate contemplation of the underlying meanings within specific discourses, narratives, and attitudes. Certain individuals might perceive the above criticism as disregarding the positive cultural and psychological facets that can be associated with Japanophilia. These individuals might also present a strong argument in a debate: if we consider Japanophilia as a form of allophilia,[265] literature indicates that allophilia consists of five key factors: *affection*, which refers to experiencing positive feelings toward an outgroup; *comfort*, meaning feeling at ease in the presence of outgroup members; *kinship*, which involves developing a sense of shared connection and belonging with the outgroup; *engagement*, characterized by actively seeking interaction with the outgroup; and *enthusiasm*, which reflects having a favorable impression of outgroup members.[266] These factors indeed represent highly positive outcomes. Others might sense that such critique challenges personal experiences – some individuals could feel that their

[265] The term allophilia, of Greek etymology, literally means "liking for others". Japanophilia is similar to the trend of Anglophilia that emerged in the mid-18th century. Admiration for another country often reflects dissatisfaction with one's own. In France and Germany, Anglophilia typically involved criticism of domestic society. In France, it became so widespread that it was eventually mocked as "Anglomania".
https://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/en/threads/models-and-stereotypes/anglophilia/michael-maurer-anglophilia (accessed: 2025 June)

[266] Sara Alfieri, Elena Marta: *Positive Attitudes Toward the Outgroup: Adaptation and Validation of the Allophilia Scale*. In: TPM Vol. 18, No. 2, June 2011., p. 4.

encounters and sentiments are being excessively scrutinised or invalidated, leading to a resistance against criticism. Counter-arguments may assert that this criticism fails to acknowledge the positive aspects of cultural exchanges and their inherent potential, or that it merely accentuates their negative attributes. The critique might also be deemed overly generalised – appearing to stigmatise and categorise all those engaged in Japan-related pursuits, whether professionally or as a hobby. In their defense, others argue that indulging in Japanophilic activities can be ethical by legitimizing their Japanophilia through purchasing services that sell them this feeling. According to this view, they believe they can repay the Japanese for captivating them so powerfully with their culture.[267]

Another critique could address the limitations of binary thinking applied throughout the Introduction and Chapter 0., particularly the 'us versus them' mentality, in discussions of identity and cultural power, especially regarding how the Self views and perceives the Other. This critique would point out that this approach inadvertently perpetuates the same binary opposition between 'Us' (the West) and 'Them' (Japan), thereby hindering a more nuanced understanding of global cultural interactions.

Since the writer of this book could not find interdisciplinary research outputs discussing the complex psychological, political, sociological, cultural anthropological aspects of cultural/political Japanophilia[268] and pro-Japan xenophilia/allophilia – particularly none that holds relevance in the Central and Eastern European region – some arguments presented in this chapter regarding the connection between the Western/semi-peripheral ego and Japanophilia remain debatable, as they consist of empirical hypothetical arguments intended to stimulate further research and counter-arguments. Currently, the absence of social metrics or psychological research concerning Japanophilia and its scientific comprehension makes it rather challenging to engage in a productive debate. In this context, both the argument and the counter-argument may carry partial validity or invalidity. That said, definitive conclusions cannot be drawn until there is scientific validation available.

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[267] *The Ethical Weaboo: How I justify being a Japanophile in a culturally appropriative world* https://www.otakujournalist.com/the-ethical-weaboo-how-i-justify-being-a-japanophile-in-a-culturally-appropriative-world/ (accessed: 2025 Jan)

[268] It could be interesting to examine the question of whether Japanophiles have a direct political inclination or not. On Reddit, commenter opinions suggest that the spectrum could vary widely, ranging from authoritarian right, libertarian right, authoritarian center, conservative authoritarian center – with an intriguingly lesser inclination towards authoritarian left. https://www.reddit.com/r/PoliticalCompassMemes/comments/jjuxix/japanophiles_are_cringe/ (accessed: 2023 Aug.)

Chapter One.

Modernization

A peculiar coincidence between Hungary and Japan? – Global inequalities in the Great Divergence – Constitutional Transformations in the Late 1860s – The formation of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy – The Compromise and the administrative characteristics of the Monarchy – The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and its surroundings – The naming and the political autonomy within the Monarchy – Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as the melting pot of different ethnicities – National identity within the Hungarian Kingdom – Agriculture, industrialization and GDP in the Hungarian Kingdom – Economy, finance, education in the Hungarian Kingdom – Magyarization efforts – Urbanization and Budapest – Public health situation – Japan's external and internal issues in the second half of the 19th century – Education in Japan – The end of the Shogunate and the first part of the Meiji period – Financial situation of Meiji Japan – Rapid development in Japan – Newspapers and the press in Meiji Japan – Public health in Meiji Japan – Colonialism – Armed conflicts – Conclusion

A peculiar coincidence between Hungary and Japan?

In 1906, Benedek Barátosi-Balogh, an ardent Hungarian Turanist, Japanophile, and traveller, an assistant teacher-turned self-made citizen anthropologist, wrote the following in his book *Dai Nippon*:

> "*Just a few years ago, during a debate in a small circle of friends, I was trying to defend my assertion that since 1867, the development that Hungary and its nation exhibited in every field is unrivalled in the history of mankind. Upon returning from Japan, and speaking highly of the nation's great development, my friends reminded me of our previous debate, and attempted to convince me, challenging my previous statement, that the Japanese should take the first place ahead of us, Hungarians. (...) It's such a peculiar coincidence that the nation of Japan stepped on the field of European-like development in 1867 as well, and since then she has reformed its wonderful culture so much so, that now she is fully capable of entering into competition with the European flag-bearer nations in every aspects of modern culture, without losing her national traits.*"[269]

[269] Barátosi Balogh Benedek: *Dai Nippon I.* 1906., pp. 22. Note the mistake in the years in the original text, since the

The aforementioned *peculiar coincidence* (which, when viewed in a global context, seems less peculiar and coincidental) led Hungary and Japan to reach important turning points almost in parallel with each other, ushering in a new era of modernization in both countries. This important turning point in Hungary was the Compromise with Austria in 1867, while in Japan it was the rebel samurai clans' coup d'état resulting in Meiji Restoration in 1868. But before delving deeper into the topic of this chapter, it is necessary to take a historiographical detour and address the debate surrounding the different approaches to terms like Meiji Ishin (明治維新), Meiji Restoration / Revolution / Renovation / Revolutionary Restoration / Revolutionary Renovation.[270] Some critique the term Meiji Restoration as a misleading translation of Meiji Ishin, arguing that it neither reflects contemporary understandings nor accurately captures the profound social, political, and ideological changes of the period. While alternative terms like those listed above have been suggested, none have gained widespread acceptance due to their own interpretive flaws. As a solution, some historians propose using Meiji Ishin in its original romaji form to avoid the problematic connotations of Western revolutionary terminology and allow for a more nuanced historical analysis.[271] Yet, this approach presents accessibility issues, as Ishin (維新, a term derived from ancient Chinese texts:「維(こ)れ新たなり」, meaning "this is new", implying that everything is being renewed)[272] is not widely recognized outside specialist circles. The writer of this book sees this deconstruction of terminology as a broader symptom of postmodernism, which dismantles familiar concepts without offering viable replacements. I would argue that this tendency leads to

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Meiji Era officially started in 1868, not in 1867.

[270] *Restoration*: This term suggests a return to imperial rule, emphasizing the reinstatement of the emperor's power, but some historians argue that it inadequately captures the profound social, economic, and political upheavals that occurred. *Revolution*: Others advocate for this term to highlight the radical transformations that reshaped Japanese society, aligning the events more closely with the concept of a revolution. Some scholars argue that while *Restoration* emphasizes continuity with Japan's imperial past, it downplays the revolutionary aspects of the period. Conversely, *Revolution* underscores the significant departures from previous societal structures. *Ishin*: Using the original Japanese term aims to sidestep the limitations of translation and the biases they may introduce, although it produces its own limitations due to the Japanese terminology. For an insightful interpretation of Meiji Japan through Trotsky's concept of uneven and combined development and Gramsci's theory of passive revolution, see: Jamie C. Allinson: *The uneven and combined development of the Meiji Restoration: A passive revolutionary road to capitalist modernity*. In: Capital & Class 34(3), 2010., pp. 469-490. DOI: 10.1177/0309816810378723; See also: Eddy Dufourmont: *Japan, a country without revolution? Uses of kakumei and historical debates in the Meiji era (1868-1912)*. In: Historians of Asia on Political Violence [online]. Paris: Collège de France, 2021. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4000/books.cdf.1118; For an apt and well-thought-out intellectual defence of the use of *restoration*, see: George M. Wilson: *Patriots and Redeemers in Japan: Motives in the Meiji Restoration.* The University of Chicago Press, 1992. pp. 4-11.

[271] Lewis Bremner, Manimporok Dotulong, and Sho Konishi (eds.): *Reopening the Opening of Japan – Transnational Approaches to Modern Japan and the Wider World*. Brill's Japanese Studies Library, Volume: 75. 2024. pp. 12-13.

[272] 大日方純夫『はじめて学ぶ日本近代史』大月書店, 2002. VOL 1. p. 65.

confusion and weakens shared historical discourse. The rejection of conventional terms like Restoration or Revolution risks leaving historians without a common language for discussion, making debates inaccessible and discouraging participation. I also find that using Meiji *Ishin* (in romaji) is a way of evading responsibility for clear definition, as it neither commits to a specific interpretation nor engages meaningfully with broader historiographical debates. (Instead of abandoning familiar terms, I would rather suggest keeping them while acknowledging their limitations, ensuring that discussions remain both comprehensible and critical. A meaningful solution could be to retain familiar terms like Restoration or Revolution with careful contextualization, clarifying their limitations rather than rejecting them outright. My approach resists the postmodern impulse to deconstruct terms to the point of rendering discourse inaccessible while still recognizing the value of re-evaluating terminology.)

A Trip to Nagasaki, by k.u.k. Sailors (Rómer Flóris Múzeum)

The main aim of this chapter is to explore possible answers to the question: why did Barátosi and his circle of Hungarian friends believe that Hungary and Japan were competing for a leading role in rapid national development at the end of the 19th century? Since both countries had to respond to the challenges of modernization to secure their positions in the shadow of powerful empires with significant military, economic, and global influence, it is worth examining their modernization processes to determine whether the original assumption holds any valid basis for comparison. By taking Barátosi's statement about this accidental connection between Japan and Hungary as our starting point, we have an opportunity to examine and assess, as objectively as possible, the approaches

to modernization of these two latecomers. This examination includes their gradual integration into global processes, despite the significant differences in geographical, social, and political circumstances between them. That is why we will concentrate on objectively comparable factors and statistical data from both sides. This will help us understand how these two latecomers developed their strategies while observing each other in their efforts to find and establish a place in the hierarchy of great powers within an interconnected, semi-globalized world. In the 19th century, being a latecomer to industrialization provided significant advantages. With established industrial nations serving as historical models, follower countries could navigate their development with greater certainty, avoiding the uncertainties faced by early pioneers. They were able to accelerate their progress by adopting existing technologies and practices, skipping over certain stages of industrial growth. Moreover, they had the opportunity to observe the mistakes and challenges encountered by more advanced nations, allowing them to avoid or mitigate similar difficulties. This combination of foresight, adaptation, and learning from others' experiences enabled latecomers to industrialize more rapidly and efficiently.

Comparisons in this chapter will primarily be based on Cengiz Dinç's 'distilled' list, synthesized from elements and factors that are considered important and prominently discussed in the literature as associated with modernity.[273] These factors can be categorized into three main, interconnected categories: Economic Growth, Secularization, and Centralization of Politics. Modernization is closely linked to economic growth, particularly in terms of increased production per capita, typically driven by industrialization. It also involves breaking free from the 'agrarian trap' and transitioning away from traditional agrarian economies. Secularization plays a crucial role, marking the decline of traditional religions and community-based values, giving way to individualism and materialism. Additionally, the rise of modern, interventionist, and bureaucratic states represents another key feature of modernization, where politics becomes more centralized and the state takes a larger role in organizing society. (Needless to say, the episodes and factors selected in this chapter are limited; nevertheless, they serve not only to illustrate how the Hungarian Kingdom and Meiji- and early Taisho-era Japan approached modernization, but also to present this process in a global context.). Cengiz Dinç's 'distilled' list of factors is presented below, with minor modifications made by the author of this book:

[273] Dinç, Cengiz: *Modernity and the West: Evolution of Their Relationship* (2007). pp. 85-87. http://kosbed.kocaeli.edu.tr/sayi13/dinc.pdf (accessed: 2025 Feb.)

- Increased, unprecedented use of energy sources
- Increased share of industrial and service sectors in the national economy, as opposed to agriculture
- Social mobility and urbanization
- Emancipation from tradition and secularization
- Increased scientific knowledge and advancement
- Application of scientific knowledge in technological-industrial development (e.g., mastery over nature, including over humans)
- Accelerated capacity for technological application, with high value addition to manufactured products
- Effective socio-economic organization (e.g., an effective state, tax collection)
- Distinctive patterns of civic urbanization
- Legal-juridical developments that extended rights and protections to individuals, and their claims to property
- Productive innovations in agriculture, commerce, and manufacturing
- Reforms in military organization, including decisively lethal upgrades in weaponry, logistics, and defense industries
- Rise of bureaucratized, territorially consolidated polities, legitimized by representational and constitutional compacts with the governed, bureaucratic efficiency, and impersonal application of rules
- Onset of a vibrant and popular print culture
- Shifting relations and mobilities between classes and estates
- Nationalist mobilizations
- Demographic transition that sustained expanding internal markets and ventures in colonialism
- Developments in the health system, making it wider and more accessible
- Strong economy
- Development of education, making it wider and more accessible

Global inequalities in the Great Divergence

Western modernity is a *perceived standard* of comparison, primarily within Western European and North American spheres. It can function as an ideology, with the inherent issue that the West may appear more unified from an external perspective than it does from within. The relative 'modernizational' success of the West came at a cost – borne by the so-called 'underdeveloped' parts of the world. It is argued that "*the West forged its identity and interests in relation to endogenous developments in Europe and America, and through relations of unequal exchange (material and cultural) with 'the*

Rest' – the frequently excluded, conquered, colonized and exploited 'other'".[274] This modernity, shaped by capitalist imperatives, also has authoritarian dimensions, as the less powerful are often coerced into 'manufactured consent' or given an 'illusory choice' in adopting it. Historically, modernization has been framed as Westernization: during colonial times, it largely meant Europeanization. The Western understanding of modernization is undeniably entangled with power dynamics. In the case of Japan, while modernization is often understood and narrated as Westernization, it was shaped by Confucian elements, with Western influences serving as a catalyst. In other words, Confucian traditions acted as the 'software', providing the intellectual framework, while Western technologies, institutions, and ideas functioned as the 'hardware', driving the modernization process. At the same time, Japan was actively reusing Western software as 'add-ons' or 'software updates' in its pursuit of imperial ambitions, adapting it to 'civilize' other Asian territories and further its goals of colonization and global power. While Meiji Japan's drive to align with the West fueled a sense of inferiority in science and technology, it also justified its supposed superiority over Asia. This dual dynamic reinforced a binary view of the advanced and civilized versus the primitive and naïve.

Early Meiji-era thinkers closely engaged with mid-19th-century British liberal thought, translating its ideas into familiar Confucian terms and adapting them to Japanese perspectives and conditions.[275] From the 1880s, German studies gained influence in Japan, making Germany a key model for law, education, and social and economic policy. This shift contributed to the rise of 'Meiji conservatism' (the use of the term appears to be vague and somewhat misleading, focusing more on weak representative institutions, limited liberties, and bureaucratic opacity, rather than on the specific aspects of Meiji legal, educational, and economic policies) as German legal and social thought increasingly shaped Japanese policymaking. Around this time, German legal and constitutional models were seen as better suited to integrating Japanese norms and the concept of a sovereign emperor. This period, known as the 'German decade' (1881-1890), saw German legal experts exerting a significant influence on law schools, universities, and legislative commissions.[276] During the Meiji era, the state prioritized jitsugaku (実学, pragmatic sciences) to build a militarily and technologically strong nation,

[274] Hall, S. et al (1992) "Introduction" in Hall S. Et al (eds.) *Modernity and Its Futures*. Cambridge, 1992. p. 2.
[275] Popular translations included: Henry Buckle's *History of Civilization*, Samuel Smiles's *Self Help*, Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics*, and John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*
[276] Erik Grimmer-Solem: *German Social Science, Meiji Conservatism, and the Peculiarities of Japanese History*. In: Journal of World History, Vol. 16, No. 2. 2005. p. 194.; 197; 198; 201.

promoting fields like industry and technology while devaluing arts and letters as yūkanteki gakumon (遊観的学問, leisured sciences) for their perceived lack of practical use.[277] This utilitarian approach, influenced by British empiricism and Confucian ethics, encouraged rational labor for collective well-being. As a result, Japanese intellectuals felt increasingly powerless, and their writings reflected disillusionment with a system that subordinated individual needs to state interests. This sentiment gave rise to the literary figure of the "superfluous intellectual", echoing Western archetypes such as the Russian lishnij chelovek (лишний человек, superfluous man) and the European fin-de-siècle dandy. Simone Müller sees this Meiji literary figure as embodying the inner conflict of Japanese intellectuals – caught between the Western ideal of individuality and autonomy, and traditional social expectations. As a product of Japan's modernization along Western lines, the superfluous intellectual also served as a vehicle for counter-discourse and social criticism.[278]

By the mid-19th century, many believed humanity was advancing toward a European-style civilization. This view led liberals to see non-European societies as inferior, justifying paternalism and imperial rule while denying them historical agency.[279] Inherent discrimination during the 19th and early 20th century – a period considered to be a critical juncture in economic history and thus often referred to as the *Great Divergence* – created global inequality. There are two major theories, *modernization theory* and *dependency theory*, that are central to explaining global inequality. Modernization theory proposes that countries progress through four stages: traditional, take-off, drive to technological maturity, and high-mass consumption. It asserts that technological advancements lead to global wealth, and low-income nations can follow the path of wealthier, modernised nations. Modernization theory posited that Western nations represent the pinnacle of development and that other regions will achieve similar progress by following the same stages, using the West as a model. It assumes a unilinear path to modernization and credits the West with a positive role in this process. However, the theory has been widely discredited due to its pro-Western bias, factual inconsistencies highlighted by critics, and its perceived agenda of promoting Western

[277] Amano, Ikuho: *Decadent Literature in Twentieth-Century Japan. Spectacles of Idle Labor.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. p. 19.; 47.
[278] Simone Müller: *The "Superfluous Intellectual" in Modern Japanese Literature in its Relation to European Thought*. In: Malinar, Angelika; Müller, Simone. Asia and Europe – Interconnected: Agents, Concepts, and Things. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018. pp. 211-212.
[279] Erik Grimmer-Solem: *German Social Science, Meiji Conservatism, and the Peculiarities of Japanese History.* In: Journal of World History, Vol. 16, No. 2. 2005. p. 193.

institutions and values in non-Western societies. In contrast, dependency theory assumes uniform resources and goals among nations, while also focusing on the inherent inequality caused by core nations (wealthy nations, or simply the 'West', meaning: West European and North American countries) exploiting semi-peripheral and peripheral nations (middle-income and low-income nations). Some scholars argue that many systems regarded as 'modern' were established during the so-called medieval period – not in the West, but in the global South and East.[280] Dependency theory aligns with the conflict perspective, emphasising how some nations gained wealth at the expense of others, particularly through colonisation.[281] However, dependency theory itself faces additional complexities in the form of deconstructional postmodern criticism, which argues that it is equally Eurocentric, just like modernization theory, and has been so from the beginning.[282]

In recent debates, labelling Meiji Japan as a latecomer is also being challenged. Some arguments – particularly those related to imperial knowledge transfer, colonization, and imperialism – suggest that Meiji Japan should not be regarded as a latecomer. Scholars approaching from this perspective aim to dismantle persistent notions of Meiji Japan as a marginal latecomer to the community of imperial powers by demonstrating that Japan engaged with trans-imperially circulating discourses and practices as early as 1868 and contributed to the development of the culture as a whole. Japanese appropriation of Western colonial discourses and methods was indeed a central component of its efforts to modernise or (seemingly) Westernise all aspects of Japanese society during the Meiji period.[283] Some even argue that imperial Japan actively fostered an unfairly-treated newcomer or latecomer image to gain an advantage in diplomatic negotiations.[284] In other contexts, Japan likewise does not appear to be a "belated"

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[280] Laura Doyle (2014): *Dialectics in the Longer Durée: The IIPEC Model of Inter-imperial Economy and Culture*. Globalizations, DOI: 10.1080/14747731.2014.972065

[281] https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Courses/Lumen_Learning/Introduction_to_Sociology_(Lumen)/10%3A_Module_7-_Stratification_and_Inequality/10.13%3A_Theoretical_Perspectives_on_Global_Stratification#:~:text=Modernization%20theory%20posits%20that%20countries,theory%20as%20Eurocentric%20and%20patronizing (accessed: Sept 2023); James McNutt: *What is modernization? Eurocentrism and periodization* In: Encounters/Encuentros/Rencontres on Education Vol. 15, 2014, 121-136, 2014 http://dx.doi.org/10.15572/ENCO2014.07; Ella Raphael: *Modernisation Theory: Challenging British Exceptionalism and the Unilinear Model* In: Retrospect Journal, Edinburgh University's History, Classics And Archaeology Magazine, 2020. https://retrospectjournal.com/2020/03/13/modernisation-theory-challenging-british-exceptionalism-and-the-unilinear-model/ (accessed: 2023 Sept.)

[282] Haldun Gülalp (1998) *The Eurocentrism of dependency theory and the question of 'authenticity': a view from Turkey*, Third World Quarterly, 19:5, pp. 951-961, DOI: 10.1080/01436599814118

[283] John L. Hennessey: *Rule by Association: Japan in the Global Trans-Imperial Culture, 1868-1912*; Linnaeus University Dissertations No 310/2018, Linnaeus University Press, pp. 3-5.

[284] Jansen, Marius B.: *Japanese Imperialism: Late Meiji Perspectives*; In: Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, eds.

nation. Its nation-state formation, which can be understood as an example of a “nativist regression” in cultural anthropology, occurred alongside similar developments in Europe and reached its first peak at the end of the nineteenth century. Far from being exceptional, Japan offers a rich source of world-historical material for studying nation-building during this period.[285]

It is undeniable that those aspiring to integrate into the global world order as outsiders and join the global centre, must navigate a series of crucial choices, make serious compromises, and, on top of that, maintain control over their internal turbulence while addressing external threats. This is essential to prevent the complete loss of their national and economic independence. They faced and responded to continuous internal and external challenges, with the answers or decisions essentially revolving around the issue of sovereignty. In order to avoid political, economic, or even territorial guardianship, it was essential for them to strengthen and thereby promote growth and development. Of course, in this struggle, Japan was clearly in a more difficult position. Scholars argue that the Meiji reforms were implemented not solely for domestic purposes but also to gain more favorable recognition from the West. Japan's encounter with modernity is marked by a fundamental ambivalence: fully embracing the Western worldview would imply accepting its own inferiority, yet outright rejection is unfeasible given the West's dominance. Consequently, Japan adopted a dual strategy, leveraging Western methods to align itself with global powers while simultaneously resisting those same methods.[286] As for Hungary, being part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy from 1867, it was no longer exposed to significant external threats. Japan and Austria-Hungary were part of a later wave of industrializers that also included Russia, Italy, and Spain, with Japan standing out despite its relatively late start. The conventional view of industrial modernization, however, begins with Britain's dominance, which lasted until at least 1860. Industrialization then spread to a first group of successful followers, including Switzerland, Belgium, France, and the United States. By the 1870s, Germany and the United States were rapidly narrowing the gap with Britain. Together with the white settler commonwealths and several smaller European countries, these nations formed the first broad wave of industrial modernization. For the century after 1870, competition for

The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 68-69.

[285] Klaus Antoni: *Kokutai - Political Shinto From Early-Modern to Contemporary Japan.* Eberhard Karls University Tübingen. 2016. pp. 242-243.

[286] François Foret, Airo Hino: *Introduction. Values in Japan and Europe: a comparative historical, socio-cultural and political perspective*. In: François Foret, Airo Hino (eds.): Value Politics in Japan and Europe, 2021. Routledge, p. 5.

industrial and economic leadership largely took place within this group of countries.[287]

A mountain hike in a place where rickshaws couldn't go

Constitutional Transformations in the Late 1860s

Mark Metzler identifies 1866 as a pivotal year in both global and domestic history, characterized by interconnected economic and social crises. In Japan, it marked the peak of nineteenth-century inflation, bringing a lasting shift in the price structure, in contrast to the temporary wartime inflations seen in China and the United States. This inflation unfolded against the backdrop of a global commodities boom that had fueled Japan's rapid trade expansion. Yet from 1865 onward, international commodity prices plummeted, triggering financial crises and waves of debt defaults from Bombay to London to Shanghai. Simultaneously, harvest failures and grain shortages deepened economic distress. Japan's 1866 rice harvest was the worst since the great famine of the 1830s, compounded by monetary inflation and civil unrest. Across Eurasia, extreme weather disrupted wheat production in Europe and caused devastating droughts in India, sending food prices soaring worldwide. This crisis culminated in an unprecedented wave of rice riots in Japan, exposing the fragile foundations of the Tokugawa political order.[288]

[287] Bairoch, P. : *The Main Trends in National Economic Disparities since the Industrial Revolution*. In: Bairoch, P., Lévy-Leboyer, M. (eds): Disparities in Economic Development since the Industrial Revolution. Palgrave Macmillan, London. 1981, pp. 272-291. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-04707-9_1; Bairoch, P.: *International Industrialization Levels from 1750 1980*, In: Journal of European Economic History, 11, p. 10.

[288] Mark Metzler: *Japan and the World Conjuncture of 1866.* Chapter. In The Meiji Restoration: Japan as a Global

The late 1860s marked a global shift toward new political frameworks, primarily between 1867 and 1868, as old regimes collapsed and new ones emerged, shaping constitutional systems that lasted until World War I. In terms of death tolls, the mid-to-late 19th century saw devastating conflicts across the world. The Taiping Rebellion (1851–1864) in China was the deadliest civil war of the century, claiming at least two million lives. In the Americas, the US Civil War (1861–1865) resulted in over half a million deaths, while wars in South America also caused significant bloodshed. In Europe, conflicts such as the Crimean War (1853–1856), the Italian Unification Wars (1859–1871), and the German Unification Wars (1864, 1866, 1870–1871) led to considerable but comparatively lower casualties. Meanwhile, Western imperial expansion, particularly Britain's wars against China and its military campaigns in India (1857–1859), further contributed to large-scale loss of life.[289]

In Europe, Bismarck's policies accelerated German unification, while Austria, weakened by its 1866 defeat, was forced into a compromise with Hungary, leading to the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy. Italy advanced its unification as Austria focused on internal matters. France, preoccupied with the 1867 World Expo, fell into isolation before suffering a decisive defeat in 1870, which led to the fall of the Second Empire, the brief Paris Commune, and the establishment of the Third Republic. Spain endured years of civil war (1868–1874), and Britain faced domestic unrest with the Chartists and the Irish Fenians, though its constitutional changes, particularly concerning Irish Home Rule, unfolded more gradually. In North America, post-Civil War Reconstruction (1865–1877) saw the U.S. enforcing constitutional changes, including the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, under military rule in the South. The U.S. also expanded territorially, purchasing Alaska from Russia in 1867, while asserting influence over Mexico, where the French-backed emperor was overthrown, restoring the republic. Meanwhile, the British, realizing their inability to defend Canada against U.S. expansion, passed the British North America Act in 1867, establishing the Dominion of Canada as a federated, self-governing entity within the Empire. In Japan, the Meiji Restoration (1868) marked a shift from feudal rule to modernization, with the goal of abolishing unequal treaties and achieving parity with Western powers. The Charter Oath of Five Articles[290] laid the

Nation, edited by Robert Hellyer and Harald Fuess, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. pp. 15–16.

[289] Michael Geyer and Charles Bright: *Global Violence and Nationalizing Wars in Eurasia and America: The Geopolitics of War in the Mid-Nineteenth Century.* In: Comparative Studies in Society and History 38, no. 4 (1996): 623–627.

[290] The Five Articles Oath (五箇条の御誓文, Gokajō no Goseimon) was the starting point and guiding principle of the Meiji transformation, issued on 6 April 1868. The oath was administered in accordance with Shinto ritual. As one of the young emperor's first significant historical acts, it also served to promote Shintō. Beyond its religious dimension, the

ideological foundation for reforms, promoting public participation, social mobility, and knowledge acquisition. The subsequent Seitaisho (Government System Document) of 1868 established a centralized government, dismantling the feudal class structure and creating the institutions necessary for Japan's transformation into a modern state. A common theme across these transformations was the prioritization of internal restructuring over foreign affairs. Most nations focused on legal, constitutional, and institutional reforms, with nationalism playing a significant role. The exception was Prussia, which leveraged this period of internal preoccupation elsewhere to drive German unification. While some changes were peaceful, others were preceded by civil wars and social upheavals, yet all were ultimately framed within constitutional settlements.[291]

The Constitution of the Great Japanese Empire (大日本帝國憲法, Dai-Nippon Teikoku Kenpō) was promulgated on 11 February 1889. It was the first written constitution in the history of the Empire of Japan. The constitution was enacted in 1890 and was modeled after the Prussian constitution, reflecting a blend of Western constitutionalism and traditional Japanese authority.[292] The most powerful and flexible justifications for an authoritarian constitutional order rooted in imperial ideology were drawn from the organicist state theories of Swiss legal scholar Johann Caspar Bluntschli.[293] It established Japan as a constitutional monarchy, with sovereignty residing in the emperor, who was positioned as a divine and absolute ruler. While the constitution introduced a

oath was later regarded as a general promise and a collection of ideas, primarily intended to reassure the great powers and make foreigners feel safe in Japan. In other words, it functioned as a message to the Western world. At the same time, the Meiji government established the Yasukuni Shrine in 1869 and institutionalized Shintō as the state religion as part of its state-building efforts. Shintō was redefined through State Shintō, distinct from earlier local and animistic practices. Yasukuni shrine commemorated those who died in the civil war against the Tokugawa shogunate and became central to shaping a national identity. The regime invoked saisei-icchi (祭政一致), merging political and religious authority in the emperor, and transformed Shintō into an emperor-centered religion. From 1871, Yasukuni played a key role in honoring national martyrs, with the state replacing familial roles in rituals and turning spirits into national deities. "*The Meiji government thus politically transformed an array of disparate local rituals and practices to deities of all kinds – local, ancestral, animalistic and otherwise other- worldly – into a religion which took cues from Confucian ancestor-worship and a celebration of a shared national past. By institutionalizing the memory of the dead, the state constructed an imagined, sacred national community. This was crucial to imperial Japan's colonial expansion. Yasukuni was the most important of a network of nation-protecting shrines located across the archipelago.*" See: Karin Narita: *Return to utopia? Vision and practice of the Japanese right at Yasukuni shrine*. In: Journal of Political Ideologies, 29:3, 2024. pp. 391-392, DOI: 10.1080/13569317.2024.2418189

[291] Balázs Rigó: *1867 as the Year of Constitutional Changes Around the World*. In: ELTE LAW JOURNAL (2017):2, pp. 39-63.

[292] The Prussian model came to the fore for two main reasons: first, the Prussian Constitution of 1848, though never fully implemented, was drafted by the king in response to revolutionary pressures, and second, the public position of the king in the framework of the revised Prussian Constitution of 1850 was seen as particularly fitting for Japan. In contrast to the parliamentary supremacy in Britain, which had evolved into a constitutional monarchy by the 19th century, and the end of the monarchy in France following the French Revolution and the establishment of the Second Republic, the Prussian model preserved a strong central monarch, which aligned with Japan's desire to maintain imperial authority while modernizing its political structure.

[293] Erik Grimmer-Solem: *German Social Science, Meiji Conservatism, and the Peculiarities of Japanese History.* In: Journal of World History, Vol. 16, No. 2. 2005. p. 199.

parliamentary system with a bicameral legislature – the Imperial Diet, consisting of a House of Peers and a House of Representatives – its powers were limited. The emperor retained supreme control over the military, foreign policy, and lawmaking, with ministers accountable only to him rather than the legislature. Although it recognized certain civil rights, such as freedom of speech and assembly, these were granted by the emperor and could be revoked at his discretion. The constitution thus preserved an authoritarian framework while incorporating elements of Western governance. A German adviser, Hermann Roesler played a key role in shaping the Meiji Constitution, which emerged in response to both external and internal pressures. Externally, Japan sought to safeguard its independence and renegotiate unequal treaties, making the creation of a constitution inevitable. Internally, opposition groups advocated for a British-style parliamentary system. Ultimately, the constitution became a defining symbol of modern Japan's emergence. Erik Grimmer-Solem noted that the Meiji Constitution, shaped by various influences, was not a mere copy of German and European models. While it departed significantly from Western legal thinking, incorporating Confucian traditions and Japanese innovations, such as a unitary family-state with a deified emperor and a more restricted Diet, it remained flexible in practice. Despite its authoritarian roots, the constitution featured checks on imperial power, an independent judiciary, legal equality, and protection of basic rights, making it modern in its approach. It was praised by many American and European constitutional experts, though criticized by Kaiser William II and some German conservatives.[294]

The formation of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

Hereunder, we will briefly go through the main events that lead to the formation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, mainly relying on the works of renowned Hungarian historians: András Gerő, László Csorba and Monika Kozári.[295] Before 1867, when the Austrian Emperor compromised with Hungary, and the new dualist system officially received the name of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1868, a lot of people were of the opinion that multinational Austria was on the brink of collapse and the same fate was

[294] Erik Grimmer-Solem: *German Social Science, Meiji Conservatism, and the Peculiarities of Japanese History.* In: Journal of World History, Vol. 16, No. 2. 2005. pp. 199-200.
[295] Csorba László: *Császárok és királyok*. In: Egy közép-európai birodalom. Bp., Officina, 2008., pp. 28-29.; Gerő András: *Képzelt történelem*. Bp., Polgart, 2004. p. 30.; Kozári Monika: *A dualista rendszer*. Bp., Pannonica, 2005., pp. 9-63.

threatening Hungary as well. From 1850, the Habsburg Empire was politically unstable. Hungarian thinkers of that time were preoccupied with the question of what would happen to the relations between Hungary and the Habsburg Empire. At the time of the Compromise, two clearly distinctive sides were debating with each other. One leader was Lajos (Louis) Kossuth, the Hungarian statesman and symbol of Hungarian nationalism, who led the Hungarian Revolution back in 1848-1849. The leader on the other side was Ferenc (Francis) Deák, another Hungarian statesman, called the 'Sage of the Nation', and the great architect of Austro-Hungary. Kossuth himself was an avid supporter of the notion of absolute national independence since the Hungarian Revolution. He thought that the Compromise was nothing but giving up on national law, a mere appeasement. He argued that it could have been possible to initiate the dissolution of Austria during its crisis in 1866 with some serious effort so that Hungary could have assumed her rightful place in the circles of independent states in Europe. Deák and his devotees, on the contrary, tried to defend the Compromise, stating that the self-determination of Hungary would get a much more solid ground than at any time since 1526, and the nation would gain external security advantages that it does not own by itself. New opportunities would open up to catch up with the economic changes of the world. Deák and his followers thought that for Hungarians, being caught in the middle of Slavic and German people, it was inevitable to have the defensive screen provided by the Monarchy. They encouraged the Compromise, so Hungary could exercise its own imperial politics, especially in the Balkan region. However, according to Kossuth and his followers, Austria was not suitable for this role. It would never defend Hungary from German and Pan-Slavic pressure. So, they envisioned a way out of this situation in the form of a defensive military alliance of the nations along the Danube River, which would be a Confederacy based on democratic principles. Those who believed in the future of the Habsburg Monarchy thought that it was better to tie the fate of Hungary to the Monarchy, and they did not feel that giving up national self-determination to a certain degree was a great sacrifice. On the other hand, those who prognosticated the end of the Habsburg Monarchy, were looking for possibilities to get rid of it, and hoped that the future of Hungary was dependent on the absolute independence of national self-determination. Many people thought that the Compromise – as a tool for Hungary's integrity and sustainability of statesmanship – was inevitable. As Gerő puts it: “*the goal was to sustain the state, the Compromise was only a*

primary-, while the politics coming with it was just a secondary tool".[296] Deak and his followers did not see any use in contradicting Austria. The fall of the War of Independence clearly showed that Hungary was not capable of prevailing against them, and Hungary could not rely on any external assistance. Kossuth thought that the progression of nations was unstoppable, and sooner or later, it would erode the multinational political frameworks inherited from the feudal ages. Deák believed that the Compromise was the lesser of the evils under the given circumstances – a relatively optimal solution at that time: a genuinely fair compromise. The responsibility for the rest lay on the shoulders of the members of the Parliament and the leaders, determining the kind of social and national politics they were willing to pursue.

The Compromise and the administrative characteristics of the Monarchy

The Compromise itself was the outcome of lengthy negotiations, during which Franz Joseph reached an agreement with the Hungarians, subsequently gaining acceptance from the leading Austrian circles. The confederation created by Austria and Hungary was named the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. (However, the Austrians regarded the entire Monarchy primarily as Austria.) In this dual confederation, the countries maintained absolute independence in their internal affairs and were not subordinate to each other. They shared a single international governing entity for their external affairs. On the external front, the Monarchy had a shared ruler and three main jointly administered areas: foreign affairs, military affairs, and financial matters. Each part of the Monarchy had its own parliament, to which its government was accountable. The Common Ministries had their headquarters in Vienna, and the ministers were accredited by the ruler. Military and foreign affairs were considered royal prerogatives, where the will of the ruler prevailed, and it had to be accepted by the common ministers. The Hungarian Prime Minister was accredited by the King. The Commander-in-Chief of the Army was the ruler. Expenses were allocated on a quota basis, subject to renegotiation every 10 years. A common weight and metric system, along with a shared currency, were introduced. Each side of the Monarchy had different state structures: Austria comprised provinces, while Hungary was unitary. In 1867, Hungary formed a Union with Transylvania, and it

[296] Gerő András: *Képzelt történelem*. Bp., Polgart, 2004. p. 30.

had a partner, Croatia, with which a separate Compromise had been reached in 1868.[297] In addition, the city of Fiume (now: Rijeka) held a special legal status as a separate entity, a so-called 'corpus separatum', and was part of Hungary.[298] In the mid-1890s, Fiume, under Hungarian administration, experienced significant ideological and ethnic conflicts, reflecting the town's diverse population of Croats, Hungarians, Italians, and Germans. The Hungarian presence in the city was growing; however, while their numbers were estimated at a few thousand around the turn of the century, many more Fiumeans were of Croatian origin. The city had a cosmopolitan hybrid identity characteristic of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, a complexity partly reflected in the fiumano dialect itself.[299] A key factor in ethnic conflicts was the Hungarian state's attempt to counter the city's strong preference for Italian culture and promote Hungarian education and language use. In the local business community, the Ossoinack family (Croatian: Osojnak) was the most prominent among those closely associated with the Hungarians, with Luigi Ossoinack being the most renowned. He was credited with launching the first overseas shipping routes and founding the Adria steamship company. Luigi played a key role as an initiator, owner, shareholder and board member of several factories and companies, including the Rice-Husking Plant, the Oil Refinery, and the *Societa Anonima Ungherese di Armamento Marittimo Oriente* (*Oriente Hungarian Shipping Company; Oriente Magyar Tengerhajózási Társaság*).[300]

The Compromise remained in effect for 50 years, outlasting many other Central European political establishments. In 1867, Hungary stood on the brink of an era where it was poised to make significant strides economically, politically, and culturally, unlike any

[297] After the Hungarian-Austrian Compromise, Hungary reached another agreement with Croatia in 1868. Under this arrangement, Croatia, Dalmatia, and Slavonia sent 40 representatives and 3 peers to the Hungarian parliament, which had authority over military, finance, legislation, and administration. The Hungarian King served as head of state, and the Crown, boundaries, and citizenship were shared due to earlier Hungarian settlement. Common affairs, such as the royal court, foreign relations, finance, customs, trade, railways, postal services, and shipping, were managed by Hungary, while Croatia retained control over internal affairs, religion, education, and judicial matters. Balázs Rigó: *1867 as the Year of Constitutional Changes Around the World*. ELTE Law Journal, 2017/2. p. 45.

[298] Kozári Monika: *A dualista rendszer*. Bp., Pannonica, 2005., pp. 9-63.

[299] A joke from the late 19th century stated that "*Fiume is a Hungarian city inhabited by Italian-speaking Croatians*". In Fiume, a distinctive dialect (Fiumano) emerged, shaped by the city's multicultural population. It was primarily a Venetian-based Romance dialect (a variety of a Romance language, which evolved from Vulgar Latin, the everyday Latin spoken by common people in the Roman Empire), but it absorbed elements from Croatian, Hungarian, German, and even some English due to Fiume's status as a major Austro-Hungarian port. The Fiume dialect was a living example of the city's multicultural character, a linguistic melting pot that reflected the complex social and political dynamics of the time. Fiumano was widely spoken by the *mularia*, the city's dockworkers, primarily of Croatian origin. They played a crucial role in the local economy by handling cargo, loading and unloading ships, and performing other essential port labor.

[300] Márton Pelles: *Rađanje moderne Rijeke, 1868. – 1918. A modern Fiume születése (1868–1918) The birth of modern Rijeka (1868–1918)*. Magyar Műszaki és Közlekedési Múzeum 2022. p. 39.

time before. Following the reasoning of Sándor Kopátsy, a renowned Hungarian historian, the existence of a multinational monarchy had only one justification from the viewpoint of world politics: the presence of numerous minorities in its area, securing the place for its common state establishment. However, a multinational state like the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy would have necessitated significant political and cultural autonomy for these small nations. Without it, survival in the 20th century was not feasible.[301] We could just stop at this point and go no further, but since there is an ongoing historical debate over how we should understand and view the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy from a political-administrative perspective – particularly regarding the question of nationalisms within it – a small detour might be useful. As is often the case in the postmodern era, historiographical narratives are being 'debunked', and the new historiographical arguments turning against them tend to spiral out into political-ideological stratospheres. (In fact, it would be surprising if there were no "debunking" of somewhat established or major narratives.) The majority of these 'new' claims contain a strong element of presentism – so much so that in some cases these narratives are constructed and referred to in order to valorize the notion of seemingly applicable models for our current times. A leading figure in this new movement, Pieter M. Judson, a history professor at the European University Institute, is of the opinion that nation-state *propagandists*, including many historians, have long shaped how Eastern European history is understood. These narratives continue to serve nation-states by justifying threats to European stability and democracy, portraying ethnic groups rather than individuals as the main actors in history. Judson notes that it is often misleadingly claimed that ethnic, linguistic, and cultural differences divide people more than other factors can unify them. He argues that Austria-Hungary is typically remembered in two problematic ways: the first, a *nationalist* view, portrays the empire as weak, dysfunctional, and inevitably doomed due to its many languages and religions, ultimately destroyed by popular nationalist movements. The second is a *nostalgic, cosmopolitan view* that sees Austria-Hungary as a multicultural society experiencing a golden age of cultural flourishing, but still doomed by radical nationalist movements and the First World War. Judson advocates for a *third way* of thinking and remembrance: a view that focuses on what the peoples of Austria-Hungary shared, since they had much in common culturally – commonalities that have been systematically overlooked.[302] He argues that Austria-Hungary's ethnic diversity was

[301] Kopátsy Sándor: *A mi XX. századunk.* Bp., C.E.T., 1996., p. 23.
[302] *What the Habsburg Empire got Right and Why it Matters* | Pieter M. Judson | Yves Mény Lecture 2019.

managed through innovative legal and administrative structures, and that nationalist conflict emerged not inevitably from multilingualism but from institutions that encouraged people to see themselves in language-based terms – a view criticized by Branko Milanović, a Serbian-American economist. Milanović raises two strong objections to Judson's arguments. First, the Monarchy's institutional fixes arose in response to existing national tensions, so they cannot be blamed for creating them. Second, economic and educational progress, which Judson praises, actually fostered nationalist movements by creating literate elites who demanded political rights, fueling the very conflicts he critiques. This led to a dilemma for the Habsburgs: maintaining poverty could limit nationalist politics but would render the Monarchy irrelevant, while promoting progress fueled nationalism, requiring ethnic-based institutions that ultimately fractured the empire. Milanović points out that Judson overlooks this dilemma, which not only defeated the Habsburgs, but also their successor states and various regimes in the region. The repeated failures of all political and economic systems attempted in Central and Eastern Europe over two centuries suggest that no arrangement could resolve these nationalist tensions.[303]

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and its surroundings

As noted by historian Zoltán Hajdu,[304] significant reorganisations occurred in the immediate surroundings of the Monarchy during the evolution of the Compromise. The defeat of Austria by Prussia in 1866, followed by the establishment of the New German Empire in 1871, marked the triumph of the unity of Little Germany. The weakening of the Ottoman Empire in the south and the strengthening of Russia's power posed challenges in the broader eastern regions. Europe's traditional great powers (England, France, Russia, Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Prussia, Ottoman Empire) were joined by two new ones (Germany, Italy) through the successful implementation of national unity movements. Germany was effectively Prussia's successor, and some historians argue that Italy was a "second-tier" great power. Meanwhile, the Ottoman Empire's decline

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqkDWXHxbnQ (Accessed: 2025 July)

[303] *The Excellent Empire or the Prison of the Peoples? A review of Pieter Judson's "The Habsburg Empire: A New History"* https://branko2f7.substack.com/p/the-excellent-empire-or-the-prison (Accessed: 2025 July)

[304] Hajdu Zoltán: *Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia geopolitikai helyzetének alakulása, 1867-1914*. In: Gulyás László (szerk.) *A trianoni békediktátum története hét kötetben. I. kötet: Trianon Nagy Háború alatti előzményei, az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia bukása*. Szeged, Egyesület Közép-Európa Kutatására, 2019., pp. 104-113.

accelerated in the early 20th century, but it remained a player in the European balance of power until World War I. The shifting constellation of great powers inherently brought forth new challenges and increased opportunities for manoeuvring for each party. The foreign policy aspirations and actions of the Monarchy were primarily shaped by its European interests, with a particular focus on its Balkan aspirations. (The predominant trend of interest is evident in the selection of joint foreign ministers, who were not chosen from the otherwise distinguished Western European ambassadors but predominantly from the heads of diplomatic posts in St. Petersburg and the Balkans.)[305] By the second half of the 19th century, it had become evident that the British Empire possessed the largest territory in the world, excelling in many aspects and was widely recognized as the preeminent power. During this period, it maintained its strength without actively pursuing an all-encompassing alliance system, traditionally adhering to a policy of "splendid isolation". In this era, the British primarily regarded Russia as their most significant opponent. In 1902, Britain entered into an agreement with Japan that was implicitly aimed at countering Russia's aspirations. For the Japanese, the Anglo-Japanese treaty represented not only international political legitimacy but also a form of support against Russia and potentially France. Concerning European affairs, in the second half of the 19th century, Russia was primarily and directly interested in the Balkan region, where it consistently clashed with the Ottoman Empire due to the straits. It also had the potential for conflict with Britain, which vigilantly guarded the seas, and with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy concerning the interior areas of the peninsula.[306]

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy presents a complex case when considering whether it qualifies as an empire. While many empires are traditionally associated with territorial expansion, pre-modern origins, and centralized governance, the definition of empire varies. Some scholars emphasize direct rule and coercion, while others focus on administrative structures, sovereignty claims, or ideological legitimacy. Although the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy lacked the overseas colonies of Britain or France, it was one of the largest contiguous states in Europe, ruling over a vast and diverse population. Its imperial status cannot be judged solely by geographic extent. It did not function in the same manner as classic empires, which often relied on brute force and unilateral control

[305] Somogyi Éva: *Magyarok a bécsi hivatalnokvilágban – A közös külügyminisztérium magyar tisztviselői 1867-1914*, Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, 2017., pp. 57-58.
[306] Hajdu Zoltán: *Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia geopolitikai helyzetének alakulása, 1867-1914*. In: Gulyás László (szerk.) *A trianoni békediktátum története hét kötetben. I. kötet: Trianon Nagy Háború alatti előzményei, az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia bukása*. Szeged, Egyesület Közép-Európa Kutatására, 2019., pp. 104-113.

over subject peoples. However, an empire is not defined solely by these characteristics but also by its structures and practices. The Habsburg Monarchy had long functioned as an empire, and while the 1867 Compromise restructured its governance, many of its imperial dimensions persisted, albeit in a more negotiated and decentralized form. It ruled over diverse ethnic and linguistic groups, administered peripheral regions in an imperial fashion, and engaged in overseas expansion, including its presence in Bosnia-Herzegovina and even Tianjin. Although it lacked the colonial reach of the British or French empires, it exhibited imperial traits in its administration and external engagements. Adding to this complexity is the presence of multiple imperial identities within the Monarchy. Some argue that Austro-Hungary contained several empires, particularly the Magyar nationalist vision of empire. Hungarian elites sought to construct their own understanding of *birodalom*, a term often translated as "empire" but which, in the Hungarian context, conveyed a meaning closer to "realm" or "sovereign composite state". This distinction was crucial, as Hungarian political and legal thought strongly resisted the idea of Hungary being part of an empire – particularly an Austrian one. The Habsburg rulers bore the title of emperor (*Kaiser*) in Austria but only king (*király*) in Hungary, reinforcing this resistance. In nineteenth-century Europe, the term "empire" was commonly associated with monarchical titles, and since Hungary was ruled by a *king* rather than an *emperor*, Hungarian legal orthodoxy insisted that it could not be considered an empire. Despite this, Hungarian aristocrats loyal to the Austrian emperor, as well as certain geography textbooks, described Hungary as part of the Austrian Empire. Nevertheless, such views remained marginal. Instead, during the pre-1848 period, the term "*magyar birodalom"* (Hungarian Empire) entered Hungarian political and academic vocabulary, reflecting a different interpretation of empire.[307] From the 1830s, Hungarian liberal nationalists called for unifying all lands under the Hungarian crown into a single governmental system. In this context, *birodalom* did not imply hegemonic expansion but rather an independent and composite monarchy under Hungarian leadership.[308] This definition remained fluid, reflecting Hungary's broader struggle over its

[307] Hungarian imperialism intensified after World War I when the idea of a distinct 'Hungarian colonialism' emerged, particularly in relation to Asia. According to this concept, Hungary could achieve greatness by leveraging its supposed kinship ties to expand into Asia – not through traditional colonial logic but through a new vision of kinship that promised vast opportunities for the Hungarian and Asian people. This idea was encapsulated in the 1923 slogan "*to colonize with love*" ("szeretettel gyarmatosítani"). Unlike classic colonialism driven by economic exploitation and imperial ambition, this vague notion framed expansion as 'economic strengthening based on reciprocity' – whatever that was intended to mean. MNL OL P 2256 személyi fond töredékek 6. Doboz 36. t. Gálocsy Árpád iratai, 1-5. F. *Előterjesztés a kettőskereszt Vérszövetség Elnöki Tanácsához a turanizmus tárgyában* 1923. júl. 19.

[308] Bálint Varga: *The Two Faces of the Hungarian Empire*. In: Austrian History Yearbook (2021), 52, pp. 118–130.

place within the Monarchy. These complexities challenge simplistic classifications of Austro-Hungary as an empire. If 'empire' is understood strictly in terms of monarchical titles and legal frameworks, then Hungary was a kingdom, not an empire, and Austro-Hungary was neither fully centralized nor entirely decentralized. As a Dual Monarchy, it had two separate governments, parliaments, and administrations, making it less centralized than classic empires like the British or Russian ones. However, central control still existed in key areas. The Emperor-King ruled both Austria and Hungary and held supreme authority as the unifying figure of the state. Certain institutions, such as foreign policy, military affairs, and finance, were managed jointly, ensuring some level of centralization. The imperial bureaucracy also played a role in governing multiethnic regions, reinforcing imperial authority. Therefore, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was neither a hegemonic empire nor a mere multinational state but something in between – a hybrid political entity that combined imperial rule over certain regions with negotiated power-sharing arrangements. It was an empire in *function*, but not in *form*, an empire by *necessity* rather than by *design*. Whether this qualifies it as an empire in the strictest sense ultimately depends on how one defines empire itself.[309]

The naming and the political autonomy within the Monarchy

We learn from a compelling study that the political category of the common state created in 1867 was not entirely clear even to contemporaries. While the Hungarians took the position that Austria and Hungary are two independent states that have renounced the independent exercise of a part of their sovereignty and exercise it jointly, a broader range of opinions could be observed in Austria. One of the most radical Austrian positions was that Hungary is just a province in Austria with a wider self-government than the others. Since the Austrian Empire (*Kaisertum Österreich / Österreichischer Kaiserstaat*), which had existed since 1804, came to an end with the Compromise, the need arose to coin a name for the new state. In 1867, Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Andrássy proposed *Kaisertum Österreich und Königreich Ungarn*, but this was rejected by Foreign Minister Beust and the Austrian Prime Minister. A year later, the Hungarian

[309] On the debates surrounding this issue, see: Bernhard Bachinger, Wolfram Dornik, Stephan Lehnstaedt (eds.): *Österreich-Ungarns imperiale Herausforderungen – Nationalismen und Rivalitäten im Habsburgerreich um 1900*. V&R unipress, 2020.

government suggested the name *Länder S. M. des Kaisers von Österreich und Apostolischen Königs von Ungarn*, but the Austrians did not accept it, citing the length and complexity of the name. The urgency to settle the dispute arose when the state, still lacking a new name, signed a trade agreement with the North German Confederation in 1868. Thus, a name still had to be devised. Varga highlights that the problem was solved with a creativity that is highly characteristic of the later operation of the Dual Monarchy. In the German version of the treaty, ratified by the Berlin and Vienna parliaments, Franz Joseph appeared with his usual titles: *Kaiser von Österreich, König von Ungarn und Böhmen*. However, according to the treaty accepted by the Hungarian parliament (1869: article 7.), the agreement was concluded by '*His Majesty the Emperor of Austria and the Apostolic King of Hungary'*. The matter of the state's name was ultimately decided by Franz Joseph himself: on November 14, 1868, he determined that his simplified title would henceforth be *Kaiser von Österreich, König von Böhmen, usw. und Apostolischer König von Ungarn*. In other words, contrary to Austrian fears, Andrássy's proposal eventually prevailed: it became evident that Franz Joseph ruled over two countries: in the first as the Austrian emperor, Czech king, etc., and in the second as the Hungarian king. The distinction between the prestige and importance of the two royal titles is clearly in favour of the latter. Andrássy also suggested defining the name of the state as *Österreichisch–Ungarische Monarchie* or *Reich*, but the term *Reich* was not widely favoured in Hungary, as it evoked memories of neo-absolutism with negative connotations for the Hungarian political elite. This is how the term *Reich* was eventually phased out of the official usage of the dual state. The introduction of the "*K. u. K.*" in the naming primarily served the interests of the Hungarian political elite. It is somewhat surprising that it took about fifty years after that to 'commonize' the name of the last important institution.[310]

Across Europe, the transition to a bourgeois society gained momentum – and in Hungary, a series of laws and state reforms accelerated this transformation:[311] **1868**: Compulsory conscription was introduced in the Royal Hungarian Defence Forces. The Emperor retained the right to command all forces, and officers were appointed by Franz Joseph himself. **1870**: Establishment of the State Audit Office. **1872**: Introduction of free

[310] Varga Bálint: *Egy össze nem álló kép mozaikjai Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia dualitásának kortárs reprezentációja* IN: AETAS 32. évf. 2017. 4. issue, pp. 5-7.
[311] Majdán János: *A polgári átalakulás üteme a Magyar Királyságban 1849 és 1918 között.* In: Ibolyától a Krizantémig 1867-1920, Nemzetstratégiai Kutatóintézet 2021. Budapest, pp. 151-158.

trade, abolishing the guild system entirely, as was common in other civil states. **1874**: Electoral law reform, replacing property-based suffrage with tax-based suffrage. **1875**: General taxation was introduced. Parliamentary representatives' work became a full-time occupation, and their legal status was regulated similarly to that in other civil states. **1876**: The Public Health Act was enacted, introducing new responsibilities across public administration, including guardianship, infrastructure (roads), education, and healthcare. **1879**: The state intensified efforts to promote the Hungarian language, sometimes forcefully. Initially, Hungarian language instruction was mandated in elementary schools, though it was not implemented in many institutions. The same law required Hungarian language instruction in teacher training colleges, significantly influencing the use of Hungarian in schools by the end of the century. **1881–1907**: A series of laws gradually expanded state support for domestic investors. Various benefits – such as tax relief and reduced transport costs – were introduced to boost domestic production of essential goods and raw materials while keeping industrial prices low. **1894**: A landmark decision was made to complete the separation of church and state. The state assumed control over church-related matters, including religious upbringing for children, civil marriage, and civil registration. **1895**: Women were granted the right to study at medical and liberal arts colleges. The Israelite religion was legally recognized, ensuring freedom of religious practice. **1907**: Sickness insurance was introduced, bringing Hungarian industry closer to the standards of Western European bourgeois states. The controversial “Lex Apponyi” law, which outraged ethnic minorities, mandated that elementary schools meet specific equipment standards and set minimum teacher salaries. Communities that could not comply were eligible for state subsidies – but only if they introduced Hungarian-language instruction. **1908**: Compulsory elementary education was made free by law. **1912**: Universities were established in Debrecen and Bratislava.

Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as the melting pot of different ethnicities

National diversity (with 11 nations) and religious diversity (involving at least seven religions) thrived in the Monarchy. The region served as the dividing line between Western and Eastern Christianity, encompassing all European denominations of Western Christianity, various trends within Judaism, and even hosting Muslim communities within

its borders. The population of the Monarchy was 37 million in 1880 and exceeded 51 million in 1914. Of the latter, 25% were German-speaking, 17% Hungarian, 13% Czech, 11% Serbian and Croatian, 9% Polish, 8% Ukrainian, 7% Romanian, 4% Slovak, 3% Slovenian, 2% Italian, and 1% belonged to other ethnicities. The population of Hungary surged from 13.6 million to 18.3 million between 1869 and 1910, with an average age of approximately 37 years in 1900.[312] Ethnic conflicts significantly shaped the Dual Monarchy's development. The Compromise served as a framework for periodic negotiations between the Austrian and Hungarian governments but only addressed their highest-level interests, leaving internal ethnic tensions unresolved. While these conflicts did not hinder economic modernization entirely, they slowed the empire's progress compared to Western Europe.[313]

The era of dualism marked a period of nation-building, the institutionalisation of national culture, and the establishment of socialisation institutions. Historian Ildikó Szabó extensively detailed this period in her paper.[314] Emphasising the dual (discursive and socialising) aspects of the national rhetoric, Szabó focused primarily on socialisation factors that had a broad impact on younger generations. These factors played a significant role in constructing the politically-driven national rhetoric, which gained widespread attention. This rhetoric took shape in the 19th century alongside the development of the concept of nation and the formation of the national community. Szabó contends that national cultures, identities, and prototypes across Europe, including Hungary, took shape during this period. National culture became institutionalised, the nation acquired a sacralized status, and a modern national consciousness with integrative power emerged. The institutional system of national culture was established during the age of dualism. This system ensured the survival, further development, and integration of the national canon – whose foundations were laid by the scientific, cultural, and political developments of the mid-19th century – into the national consciousness.

When it comes to the acceptance of Dualism and its shared symbols, the picture remains complex. András Cieger argues that while the Monarchy fostered cultural and economic ties, a unified sense of belonging never took root. Its complex institutions felt distant, and the 1867 compromise failed to inspire broad satisfaction or public

[312] Robin Okey: *The Habsburg Monarchy 1765-1918 – From enlightment to eclipse*. Macmillan Press 2001., p. 310.
[313] Jürgen Nautz: *Ethnic, Religious, Cultural Plurality and Economic Institutions*. In: Georges Depeyrot (ed.), Currency, Money, and Economic History (Collection Moneta 206), Wetteren: Moneta 2019, p. 117.
[314] Szabó Ildikó: *Nemzetfogalom és nemzeti identitás a dualizmus korában és a Horthy-korszakban*. In: Politikatudományi szemle – 15. évf. 1. sz., 2006.

engagement. Instead, the system relied on passive acceptance in exchange for stability. Franz Joseph became its sole unifying symbol, with loyalty to the dynasty replacing imperial patriotism – yet he also hindered trust in the system. Hungarian political thought increasingly saw Hungary as Austria's successor. Meanwhile, Austria's elite showed little interest in legitimizing the dualist system, having had no role in the compromise. Celebrating the union meant abandoning a unified Austrian state, while emphasizing the Dual Monarchy risked weakening regional identities and federal ambitions.[315]

National identity within the Hungarian Kingdom

The modern Hungarian national consciousness and the self-stereotype of the 'Hungarian' emerged during the reform era (1825-1848) and underwent further refinement in the era of dualism. The narrative surrounding the conquering Hungarians, the age of nomads and free migration, the conquest of the Carpathian Basin, and various 'adventures' served to bolster the image of the 'old glory' of the Hungarian nation, perpetuating myths of governance prowess, courage, and cultural superiority. The topos of the Hungarian national canon, akin to those of other national canons, served the purpose of creating an ideological portrayal of the nation. The structure of the national canon comprised overlapping, interconnected, and mutually reinforcing topos, which became integral to the national culture and persisted in political and national socialisation. This intricate network included prominent personalities, historical events, memorials, narratives, symbols (both tangible and symbolic), literary and musical works, visual arts, buildings, institutions, crisis and glory stories, national symbols, and the national anthem. From Ildikó Szabó's thesis, we also learn how the history of the Kingdom of Hungary at the time aligns with the significant era of national awakening, the emergence of nationalisms, and myth-making in the 19th century. During this period, the most well-known national myths took shape with the contributions of intellectuals, becoming integral to the understanding of the nation. Myths about the nation's origins, its exceptional qualities, its standing among other peoples, and the values of its celebrated figures were embedded in collective memory as pre-packaged, structured, emotional,

[315] Cieger, András: *The Symbolic World of 1867: Self-Representation of the Dual Monarchy in Hungary.* In: The Creation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy: a Hungarian perspective. Routledge studies in modern European history . Routledge, New York, 2022. pp. 60-62.

and faith-based units. Literature played a role in the canonization process by transforming fables, legends, and often fragmentarily preserved stories from historical memory into literary works (or even creating new legendary narratives). Additionally, literature established new national self-expression and self-evaluation schemes. The introduction of compulsory schooling, the development of the public education system, and curriculum regulation in Hungary under the Dual Monarchy ensured that the acquisition of the national canon became an integral part of the school's socialisation activities. From the 1880s, the role of the media became increasingly significant in shaping themes. With the widespread adoption of reading, illiteracy became less of an obstacle to comprehension. On one hand, content related to the nation reached various segments of society through socialisation agents such as schools, churches, the military, and the press. On the other hand, it spread through cultural institutions, performances, creations, and the intricate web of cultural life. Schools extended their reach to more people, churches reached almost everyone within their denomination, and through the military, almost all conscripted men could be reached. The effectiveness of these institutions was further enhanced by their ability to systematically and consciously convey content that was crucial from the perspective of identities. In the multi-ethnic Kingdom of Hungary, the school system provided the state with ample opportunities to shape citizen behaviour. One instrument of national socialisation was the regulation of the language of education, rooted in the concept of a political nation, where the right to mother-tongue schooling held a significant place. After the Compromise, the primary objective of the public education system was to foster the formation of the Hungarian nation-state and to educate citizens with a unified national culture and identity. In terms of the Hungarian national canon, two events stood out in the 19th century: the 1848-49 revolution and war of independence, which reverberated in family histories, and the state celebration of the millennium (Hungary commemorated the thousand-year anniversary of the conquest and founding of the state in 1896). The series of millennium celebrations activated and sustained a strong sense of national belonging, using commemorations, constructions, publications, works of art, attractions, and presentations of national culture to depict the Hungarian nation as a collection of positive values at the forefront of the medium-sized empire. During this period, the modern printed press system had already been established in the country. The railway network facilitated the distribution of national dailies, weeklies, and periodicals to every corner, and the publication of local newspapers coincided with the era of strong urbanisation. The preparations for the Millennium

Exhibition, the resonance of the exhibition and its enduring impact, architectural developments, the exploration of folk culture, and historical paintings all contributed to nurturing the self-awareness of the medium-sized nation. By the end of the 19th century, the image of a glorious, tragedy-defying Hungarian nation became sacralized. The heroic and chivalrous nation, with the capacity to lead the region, held a prominent position in the sociological construction of knowledge that hierarchically organised peoples and ethnic groups. The members of the non-Hungarian ethnic communities became individuals within the state-forming nation. However, politics couldn't make this national model appealing to them. The nationalities law was not accompanied by the realisation of political equality for these communities, and the democratic political foundation of the nation as a political community – encompassing elections, education, and more – was left unfulfilled. There was a significant degree of assimilation at the level of individual identities, but the concept of the Hungarian political nation could not become attractive to the non-Hungarian-speaking minorities of the Kingdom of Hungary as collectivities. At the time of the formation of modern national consciousness, the conceptual frameworks of the nation model, based on citizenship-based legal and political aspects, as well as language, religion, origin, and cultural identity, were already established in dualism-era Hungary. These were open to each other, which made assimilation possible for many, but at the same time – as the efforts to create new, independent states showed – it also facilitated the strengthening of separate national consciousness. In the civilizing, dynamically developing, mobile world of the Monarchy, individual life paths often led from one linguistic-ethnic group to another. There has not yet been an insurmountable gap between the concepts of ethnicity and nationality. National identity did not necessarily coincide with citizenship, but it did not exclude it either. After 1875, the demand for belonging to an independent nation-state increased among the peoples living in the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary. People of non-Hungarian nationality increasingly rejected the official Hungarian national concept, which only took their citizenship into account, as they perceived it to exclusively accommodate the Hungarian political nation, and they felt that their status was reduced to subordinate subjects. The strengthening of the national identity of both Hungarians and non-Hungarians spurred research into historical origins, historical painting, and sculpture, all seeking expressions of national identity. Concurrently, industrial art endeavours sought to establish national forms. The end of the century marked the period of discovery in ethnographic, linguistic, folk music, and folk poetry heritage, along with the creation of national-style architecture and music.

Simultaneously, the prospect of shaping national culture and influencing national identity presented a significant challenge for artists. In the first decade of the twentieth century, political emphases underwent a rearrangement; conservative ideas prevailed among the middle classes of gentry origin, anti-Semitism gained strength, and social and national antagonisms intensified. During the turn of the century, the gap between the politically cultivated concept of the nation and the concept held by non-Hungarian nationalities grew larger and larger. Non-Hungarians wanted more rights and territorial autonomy. A significant dividing line between the Hungarians and the nationalities proved to be that the thousand-year Hungarian statehood played a decisive role in the national consciousness of the Hungarians, while the non-Hungarians, by definition, lacked the moment of their own statehood. The elite of the nationalities increasingly regarded their own nation-state as a reality. Intellectual ideas that sought a solution in a state confederation based on the equality of states and peoples received neither political nor social support.[316]

Agriculture, industrialization and GDP in the Hungarian Kingdom

At the time of the Compromise, nearly 80% of Hungary's population relied on agriculture, constituting two-thirds of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). By the 1880s, 74% of the active population was engaged in agriculture, a percentage that decreased to 60% by 1910. Just before the outbreak of the First World War, agricultural production still contributed significantly, accounting for 62% of the GDP. Agriculture retained its status as the most influential factor in the national economy throughout this time.[317] During the time of the Compromise, industrialization in Hungary was at a very low level. However, leading up to the war, the industrial sector grew significantly, contributing a third of the national income. The primary industry was the food industry, particularly the milling sector, although meat processing and sugar production also thrived. Hungary's industrial strength was predominantly centred on flour production and mills. In approximately 1865, this sector accounted for 73% of the total added value of production, with the iron industry contributing 22% (the most profitable sectors between 1906 and 1913 were

[316] Szabó Ildikó: *Nemzetfogalom és nemzeti identitás a dualizmus korában és a Horthy-korszakban*. In: Politikatudományi szemle – 15. évf. 1. sz., 2006. pp. 201-214.
[317] *Encyclopedia of the age of the industrial revolution 1700-1920*, VOL I.; Edited by: Christine Rider; Greenwood Press, USA, 2007., pp. 26., 75.

credit institutions and heavy industry, as shown in the table below, which presents the average profit rates of public limited companies in Hungary across various sectors).

	1906	1910	1913
Credit institutions	15,8	14,5	14,3
Iron and steel industry	16,7	16,3	18,4
Mechanical and electrical engineering	9,5	13,6	10,3
Construction materials industry	12,7	10,9	6,9
Textiles and clothing industry	10,8	6,4	9,1
Flour milling industry	n.a.	n.a.	8,5
Sugar industry	n.a.	n.a.	7,6
Other food industries	10	12,5	10,7
Chemical industry	11,5	5,3	6,8

Average profit % of public limited companies in Hungary, 1906-1913, by Béla Tomka[318]

By 1913, the iron industry expanded dramatically, comprising 40% of the total added value of industrial production, while flour maintained a substantial 38%. The spirit, tobacco, and wood processing industries held notable importance, with the silk industry and its related activities gaining increasing prominence. In 1879, only 1,059 families were engaged in silkworm cultivation, but by 1905, this number had surged significantly to 109,790 families.[319] Recognizing the potential of the silk industry, the Hungarian government, as early as 1870, supported the importation of Japanese silkworms, known for their resistance to European diseases. In his speech at the 112th National Assembly, Economy Minister István Gorove stated, "*Measures are being taken to improve silkworms, especially in preventing diseases, by introducing new seeds into the country, particularly from Japan.*"[320] Thanks to the successful efforts of the government, the silk industry experienced a remarkable boom, a stark contrast to its almost nonexistent presence in the 1870s. By 1905, with a cocoon production of 1,915 tons, Hungary secured the third position in Europe, trailing behind traditional silk-producing countries like Italy and France.[321]

[318] Tomka Béla: *Érdek és érdektelenség: a bank-ipar viszony a századforduló Magyarországán, 1892-1913*. Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, 1999. p. 159.
[319] Geoffrey Drage: *Austria-Hungary*, E. P. Dutton and Co., London, 1909, p. 331.
[320] Országgyűlési Képviselőházi Napló, 112. országos ülés, 1870. 02. 04., p. 142.
[321] Sebestény Endre: *A selyemhernyó tenyésztése*. Bp., 1957.

Before the First World War, Hungary's GDP constituted three-quarters of the total GDP of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, yet it remained below 60% of the Western European average. A comparison of GDP per capita in different countries during the time of the Dual Monarchy can be seen below.[322] The other table presents David F. Good's calculations of growth rates, showing that the Hungarian Kingdom's economy grew faster than most European economies in the late nineteenth century.

GDP/capita on the basis of 1990 international dollar	**1870**	**1900**	**1913**
Great Britain	3190	4492	4921
USA	2445	4091	5301
Germany	1839	2985	3348
France	1876	2876	3485
Italy	1499	1785	2564
Finland	1140	1668	2111
Hungary	1091	1682	2098
Russia	943	1196	1488
Japan	737	1180	1387
China	530	545	552
India	533	577	673

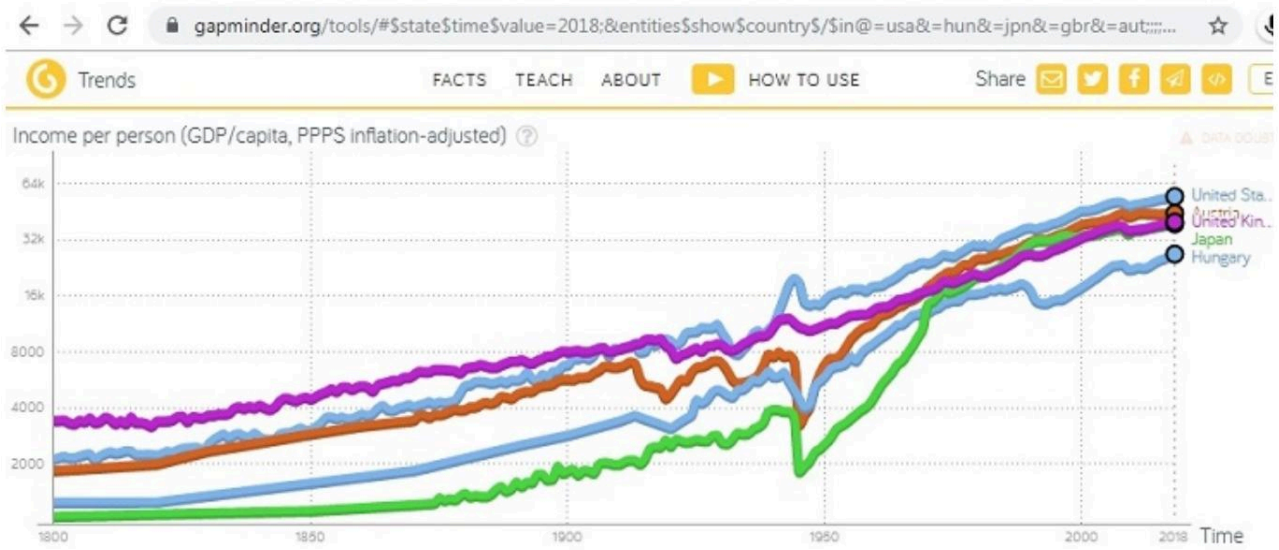
Growth rates of GDP per capita by country within post-1989 borders, 1870–1910, compared to Sweden's growth rate (Sweden's GDP/Capita in 1870, 1890, 1910; each=100)[323]

Great Britain	1
Belgium	1.03
Netherlands	0.9
France	1.09
Germany	1.63
Switzerland	1.18

[322] Muraközy László: *A japán rejtély – Útteremtő csodák és végzetes zsákutcák*. Akadémiai Kiadó, 2016. pp. 77., 144., 238.; Tomka Béla: *Gazdasági változások és a fogyasztás alakulása a huszadik századi Magyarországon.* In: Kovács Kiss Gyöngy, Romsics Ignác (szerk.) A mi 20. századunk. Kolozsvár, Komp-Press Kiadó–Korunk, 2011, p. 168.

[323] David F. Good: *The Economic Lag of Central and Eastern Europe: Income Estimates for the Habsburg Successor States, 1870-1910.* In: The Journal of Economic History, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Dec., 1994), p. 886. Sweden was chosen as a useful benchmark because, in 1870, it was relatively underdeveloped within Europe, yet it grew to one of the world's highest income levels by the time the paper was written.

Denmark	1.55
Finland	1.4
Norway	1.11
Sweden	1.49
Italy	1
Portugal	0.3
Spain	1.37
Imperial Austria	1.48
Imperial Hungary	2
Habsburg Monarchy	1.63
Austria	1.44
Czech Republic	1.54
Slovakia	1.85
Hungary	2.15
Poland	1.53
Slovenia	1.62
Croatia	1.76
Serbia	1.83
Ukraine	1.56
Romania	1.85
Russia	0.72



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Income per person (GDP/Capita, PPPS inflation-adjusted) of the United States, Austria, United Kingdom, Japan and Hungary from 1800 to 2018. (Gapminder.org, accessed: 2018 nov.)

Economy, finance, education in the Hungarian Kingdom

In terms of trade, Austria sought to enhance its industrial sector through exports after 1867, while Hungary primarily fostered its nascent industry through import substitution. Concurrently, foreign trade within Austria-Hungary remained relatively low. Austria played a major role in Hungary's industrialization, largely through the infusion of foreign capital. Numerous European entrepreneurs invested in Hungary, with many choosing to settle, such as the Swiss entrepreneur Abraham Ganz, who played a pivotal role in industrialization, significantly contributing to the region's development.[324] By the turn of the century, the Ganz factory had earned recognition as a major company, serving as a driving force in domestic industry and achieving market success in various parts of the world. In the early 1900s, the factory's exports accounted for 60-80% of its production.[325] During that era, the primary industries encompassed the production of electric machines, agricultural machinery, steam motor coaches, pumps, and railway cars. Water regulation and railway construction played pivotal roles in the evolving Hungarian infrastructure. From the time of the Compromise, the country's railway network expanded tenfold by 1914, reaching 2,160 km of tracks. Foundational steps in urban transport were taken around the turn of the century, initiating tram transport and culminating in the construction of the continent's first underground railway in 1896. Undoubtedly, the most developed sectors of the Hungarian economy were transportation (railways) and banking. To understand the differing railway developments in Austria and Hungary, it is useful to draw on the excellent overview by János Majdán. Two years after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, Hungary established a framework that allowed its government to independently manage the financial, developmental, and operational aspects of its railway system through a state-owned company. Following the financial crisis of 1873, private railways in Austria no longer received state interest guarantees, forcing investors to cover the full cost of construction. Over the next fifteen years, the Austrian railway network expanded to 11,408 kilometers, but state-owned lines accounted for less than 10% of this total. Additionally, Austria lacked a uniform tariff system, leading

[324] *Encyclopedia of the age of the industrial revolution 1700-1920*, VOL I.; Edited by: Christine Rider; Greenwood Press, USA, 2007., pp. 24., 26-27., 74-75.
[325] In the early 1900s, Ganz also established connections with Japan, as discussed in Chapter Four.

to inefficiencies in railway operations. During the same period, railway expansion in the Kingdom of Hungary resulted in 7,204 kilometers of new lines, with state-owned railways making up approximately 16%. The financial burden on the Hungarian budget increased due to guaranteed interest rates in private railway contracts, yet the government had no authority over key operational aspects such as traffic organization, timetables, or tariffs. As the Hungarian economy recovered and grew, efforts to consolidate and nationalize the railways gained momentum. The establishment of MÁV (Hungarian State Railways) marked a turning point, as it became the largest state-owned enterprise in Hungary. Its influence extended beyond transportation, creating jobs, introducing new work practices, and significantly transforming everyday life. From the 1880s onward, railway development in Austria and Hungary followed divergent paths. In Austria, state railway expansion remained limited and fragmented, while joint stock companies continued to dominate the sector. The absence of a uniform tariff system posed persistent challenges for both freight and passenger transport. Meanwhile, Hungary pursued the opposite strategy, gradually nationalizing its railways to form a unified network with standardized rolling stock. This centralization process culminated in 1891 when MÁV became profitable. The realization of a decades-old vision resulted in a predominantly state-owned railway system, which, following major investments, contributed to a positive national budget the following year.[326]

Alongside railway expansion, the port of Fiume, then part of the Kingdom of Hungary, underwent significant development, becoming a hub for several Hungarian shipping companies connecting with global markets. Fiume had a population of less than 18,000 in 1869, and it had experienced rapid growth by 1910, reaching 50,000 inhabitants. This expansion was fueled by significant investments in port development, industrialization, and the city's increasing role in tourism. By 1910, Fiume had become one of the busiest ports in Europe, ranking between Amsterdam and Venice, and the 10th busiest overall. In the late 19th century, Fiume's merchant navy was relatively small, with 533 ships, including 39 fishing boats and 126 other vessels. However, it lacked steamships until the establishment of the Adria company's fleet in 1882. With the construction of Fiume's railways in 1873 and ongoing port development through the early 20th century, the city underwent a vast transformation. The port, once unsuitable for steamships, became a major hub, greatly contributing to the Hungarian state's economy.

[326] Majdán János: *Viták, tervek és a valóság – a vasúti fejlesztések birodalmi és magyarországi megvalósulásáról.* In: Ibolyától a Krizantémig 1867-1920, Nemzetstratégiai Kutatóintézet 2021. Budapest, pp. 148.

Between 1867 and 1913, Fiume's export turnover skyrocketed from 10 million krones to 265 million, while imports surged from 12 million to 213 million, with an average annual growth of 8.3 percent. Industrial growth also accompanied the port's expansion. Fiume became home to Central Europe's first crude oil refinery, the Ganz Danubius shipyard, and several other factories processing raw materials into finished products for export. Among the other major industrial factories and companies were the Whitehead and Co. Torpedo and Engine Factory, the First Fiume Rice Mill and Farinaceous Factory, a timber factory, the Cocoa and Chocolate Factory, a Coffee Roasting Company, two chemical factories, a cast steel plant, the Hungarian-Croatian Asphalt Works company, the First Fiume Parquetry and Steam Sawmill, the Hungária Vegetable Oil Factory, a rope factory, the Fiume Furniture Company, the First Fiume Steam Laundry and Ironing Company, a leather factory, an ice factory, a gas plant, a cognac factory, a brick factory, and more. The Austrian-Hungarian Lloyd, established in Trieste, played a key role in the city's maritime traffic, though the Hungarian government later withdrew funding from the Austrian company to develop its own steamship companies in Fiume. Passenger traffic grew alongside port activity, driven by Adriatic voyages, emigration to America, and long-distance luxury cruises. Between 1904 and 1913, Fiume's Cunard service carried over 335,000 emigrants to America, a booming business that contributed to the city's prosperity. Fiume also became a center for maritime education. The Naval Academy (Nautica) moved into its own building in 1895, and other institutions, such as the Bacar maritime school and the Exports Academy established in 1912, trained professionals for the growing maritime and trade sectors. Although the use of Hungarian as the language of instruction at the Exports Academy was controversial locally, it attracted a significant number of Hungarian students. The town was also home to the Monarchy's only Naval Force Academy, which further supported its maritime prominence. By 1914, Fiume had fully integrated into the fabric of European maritime and industrial networks, with substantial contributions to the economy and cultural life of the region.[327]

Postal traffic within the Hungarian Kingdom also experienced a boom, and in the 1880's, the construction of telephone networks began in Budapest and rural areas.[328]

In 1892, Austria and Hungary transitioned from the silver-based forint to the

[327] Márton Pelles: *Rađanje moderne Rijeke, 1868. – 1918. A modern Fiume születése (1868–1918) The birth of modern Rijeka (1868–1918)*. Magyar Műszaki és Közlekedési Múzeum (Hungarian Museum of Science and Transportation 2022. pp. 45-65.

[328] *Kettős kötődés – Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia*. Encyclopaedia Humana Hungarica 08. Cd-rom

gold-based currency, the krone (korona). The mandatory calculation in krone instead of forint came into effect on January 1, 1900, following the government's decree dated November 1, 1899. The forint–krone exchange rate (2:1) had already signaled a strengthening of the economy. This shift to a gold-based currency was deemed necessary from an economic standpoint, allowing the Monarchy to avoid commercial isolation and simultaneously establish trade contracts with foreign states on more favourable terms.[329] Yet, the transition occurred relatively late, as by then, most countries had already adopted a gold-based economy: England and Ireland in 1816, Portugal in 1854, Germany in 1871, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and the USA in 1873, the Netherlands in 1875, Finland in 1877, Romania in 1890, and Russia in 1897. Concurrently, a bimetallic dual currency system (based on gold and silver), known as the Latin Currency Union, was in existence, involving France, Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, and Greece.[330]

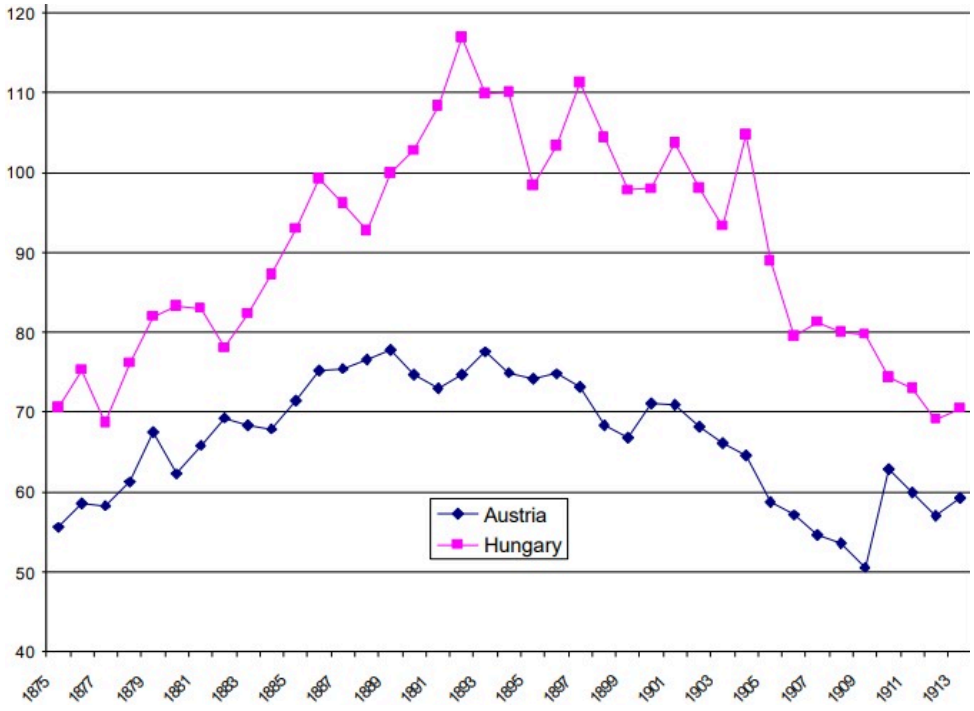
The economic transformation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was driven by innovation-focused investments, with the emerging bourgeoisie replacing the landowning nobility as the primary investors. Lacking their own capital, they relied on lending, leading to the rapid expansion of financial institutions after the Compromise of 1867. Following the 1867 Compromise, Hungary attracted significant foreign investment, but the 1873 financial crash deterred many investors, particularly from France, Britain, and Belgium. While Western European capital largely withdrew, southern German and Austrian financial institutions adapted and remained active.[331] Regarding the situation of capital in Hungary, Béla Tomka noted that there is no evidence of a significant capital shortage in dualist-era Hungary. The role of capital-intensive industries in the growth process was minimal. In this respect, Hungary was similar to Denmark: both countries experienced rapid economic growth in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but without substantial capital-intensive growth. Moreover, it can be assumed that self-financing played a significant role for many firms in capital-intensive industries. On the other hand, Hungary benefited from the Monarchy's unified capital market, which facilitated a large inflow of

[329] Molnár Péter: *A korona pénzrendszer bevezetése, megszilárdulása és bukása, különös tekintettel Magyarországra (1892-1925)*. Budapest, 2011., p. 14.
[330] Molnár Péter: *A korona pénzrendszer bevezetése, megszilárdulása és bukása, különös tekintettel Magyarországra (1892-1925)*. Budapest, 2011., pp. 44-51.
[331] The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was a prime target for German investment in Europe. Tomka Béla: *A német tőke Magyarországon az első világháború előtti évtizedekben.* In: Századok 135(5). pp. 1053-1073.

Austrian capital, thereby significantly improving the supply of capital.[332] As Hungary's financial sector modernized, regional private banks emerged alongside metropolitan institutions. A major shift occurred in 1885 with the establishment of the Post Office Savings Bank (Postatakarékpénztár), which expanded financial inclusion through a state-backed savings system. Offering tax-free interest and accessibility even to minors, it became a popular savings option for lower-income groups while also supporting economic growth.[333] In 1877, Hungary adopted a single imperial currency, which triggered a banking boom. By 1910, nearly 3,500 settlements had banking institutions, marking substantial financial modernization. The establishment of the Austro-Hungarian National Bank in 1878 further accelerated this growth, with banking branches increasing from 84 in 1866 to nearly 6,000 by 1913. Initially decentralized, the banking system saw a shift toward centralization from the 1890s onward, as major banks expanded beyond Budapest. By 1910, banks in the capital controlled over 56% of the system's capital. While cooperatives initially served rural areas, large banks eventually took over to support bigger investments. This financial expansion laid the foundation for a modern banking system, ensuring both accessibility and capital accumulation, which significantly contributed to Hungary's economic progress within the Monarchy.[334] Some argue that Hungarian banks did not have the same level of investment activity as their German and Austrian counterparts, nor did they play as significant a role in Hungary's industrialization. That said, Hungarian banks were more involved in financing other industries, especially transportation, to a degree that was at least as high, if not higher, than the involvement of industrial banks, even in the period just before the World War.[335] Hungary's economic ties with Austria did not benefit all industries equally, but they eased capital shortages by enabling a significant transfer of funds from the more developed western provinces. The country's high number of joint-stock companies, particularly compared to Austria, further boosted capital supply. Moreover, stock market development helped mobilize capital for

[332] Tomka Béla: *A magyar bankrendszer fejlődésének sajátosságai nemzetközi összehasonlításban, 1880-1931*. In: Századok, vol. 133 (1999), no. 3, p. 673.
[333] The smallest possible deposit was 50 kreuzer, with a state-guaranteed interest rate of 3.6%, exempt from taxation. Even minors could open savings accounts, purchase savings stamps, and affix them to their savings books. This inclusive savings scheme provided a secure option for those with modest funds while channeling domestic capital into economic development. Despite an upper limit of 1,000 forints, it became a popular saving method among peasant households, working families, and the lower urban middle class. Majdán János: *A polgári átalakulás üteme a Magyar Királyságban 1849 és 1918 között.* In: Ibolyától a Krizantémig 1867-1920, Nemzetstratégiai Kutatóintézet 2021. Budapest, p. 155.
[334] Zágonyi Ádám: *Monetáris politikai előképek – pénzügyek az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchiában.* In: Ibolyától a Krizantémig 1867-1920, Nemzetstratégiai Kutatóintézet 2021. Budapest, pp. 183-188.
[335] Tomka Béla: *A magyar bankrendszer fejlődésének sajátosságai nemzetközi összehasonlításban, 1880-1931*. In: Századok, vol. 133 (1999), no. 3, p. 665.

industry, reducing reliance on external borrowing and banks.[336]



Debt GDP ratios in Austria and Hungary[337]

The economy witnessed its final flourishing period between 1906 and 1913, which influenced urbanisation. In turn-of-the-century Hungary, education and proficiency in the sciences and arts held significance, with even members of parliament and ministers engaging in literary pursuits, authoring stories, novels, and plays while proudly showcasing their literary interests. At one point, Hungary had more daily newspapers in circulation than Austria. For instance, in 1895, a total of 806 newspapers were published, and this number increased to 1,143 Hungarian-language newspapers by 1910. During this period, Hungary boasted a total of 460 magazines. The literacy rate saw a notable increase due to industrialization (especially in the Western half of Hungary), and the public education law introduced by Joseph von Eötvös, a Hungarian statesman.[338] In

[336] Tomka Béla: *Érdek és érdektelenség: a bank-ipar viszony a századforduló Magyarországán, 1892-1913*. Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, 1999. p. 170.
[337] Marc Flandreau, 2001. "*The Bank, the States, and the Market: An Austro-Hungarian Tale for Euroland, 1867-1914*," Working Papers 43, Oesterreichische Nationalbank (Austrian Central Bank)., p. 49.
[338] Joseph von Eötvös had previously served as the Minister for Religion and Education in Kossuth's revolutionary government, where he played a crucial role in drafting a progressive bill for the implementation of compulsory general education. However, due to the course of events and the Hungarian Revolution, he had to temporarily leave Hungary. Following the Compromise of 1867, when Deák formed a new national government, Eötvös resumed his role as the Minister of Religion and Education. During this time, he took charge of drafting a new education law, which was eventually introduced in 1868.

1868, the year the law was implemented, only 41% of the male population could read and write. As a result, the proportion of literate individuals rose to almost 70% by 1910 (reaching 90% in Budapest by 1900).[339] The rising literacy rate channelled growing numbers of young people into higher education, and Hungary's relative position can be assessed through a noteworthy dataset on university participation published in a 1902 ranking. The list included 172 cities and universities: Paris ranked first with 12,171 students, followed by Berlin with 12,063 students, Cairo in third place with 9,060 students, Budapest in fifth place with 5,661 students, Oxford in sixteenth place with 3,499 students, the University of Tokyo in twenty-third place with 2,908 students, and finally, the University of Ferrara with 109 students.[340]

Magyarization efforts

From 1867 to 1918, Hungarian liberalism shaped the Dualist era, pairing major reforms and a notably progressive Nationalities Law with a strong nationalist agenda. Because the Austro-Hungarian Compromise constrained consistent liberal reform, the state increasingly prioritized Magyar political, cultural, and economic dominance. This produced a lasting dual strategy: presenting the nation as inclusive of minorities while simultaneously pressing those minorities toward assimilation into Magyar culture, especially as minority movements gained strength after the 1890s.[341] The 1896 Millennium celebrations strengthened Hungarian nationalism by advancing scholarship and reinforcing the idea that Magyar leadership in the Carpathian Basin was both historically legitimate and politically necessary. This message drew criticism from national minorities, who objected to the Exhibition's portrayal of civilization as an essentially Magyar achievement that marginalized their own contributions. (At the same time, however, the ethnographic displays introduced a more inclusive note by consciously showcasing the region's ethnic diversity and cultural richness.)[342] The outcomes of Hungarianization (or Magyarization) policies during this period can be assessed by

[339] Robin Okey: *The Habsburg Monarchy 1765-1918 – From enlightment to eclipse*. Macmillan Press 2001., p. 310.
[340] Erdélyi Múzeum XIX. kötet, V. füzet, 1902., pp. 255-258.
[341] Emese Lafferton: *The Magyar moustache: the faces of Hungarian state formation, 1867–1918*. In: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, 38 (2007), p. 707.
[342] Emese Lafferton: *The Magyar moustache: the faces of Hungarian state formation, 1867–1918*. In: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, 38 (2007), p. 720.

examining the proportion of the urban population in the cities of the Kingdom of Hungary with knowledge of the Hungarian language. This question was researched by the historian Bálint Varga in a paper in which he analysed 10 central cities from the point of view of language knowledge (except for Budapest, which was both the national capital and a metropolis, and whose language status was not examined in this study).[343] The study demonstrated that the Kingdom of Hungary was less multilingual than researchers had previously believed. The Hungarian language became mandatory in primary schools within the Kingdom of Hungary starting in 1879. In middle and high schools, which, in contrast to elementary schools, enrolled significantly fewer students, German was the primary language of instruction. In the Kingdom of Hungary, the French language held a prominent position among women of the middle and elite social classes; it was the only foreign language spoken by more women (both middle- and upper-class) than men. Of course, migration also played a role in the learning and use of the Hungarian language, especially in urban areas. However, it should be added that, despite organised public education and modern industrialization, approximately two-thirds of Hungarians did not reside in cities but in villages and rural areas. This also implies that the majority of these individuals did not necessarily need to develop their language skills, as they lived their lives within the specific native language environment in which they were born. The study also highlights that the proficiency in the Hungarian language alone did not necessarily indicate a distinct Hungarian identity. For instance, while Hungarian language skills were at times required from individuals working in public areas, they did not always correlate with a clear sense of Hungarian identity. The understanding of the Hungarian language itself poses an intriguing question in the Kingdom of Hungary during that period, as there is a complete absence of contemporary data providing exact insights into language proficiency. The study's findings, spanning from 1880 to 1910, are summarised as follows:

- “absolute monolingual cities”: Debrecen and Szeged; predominantly Hungarian with only a small number of German speakers
- “disappearing monolingual” cities: Pécs and Győr; a significant majority speaks Hungarian, but the monolingual nature is diminishing over the years, with a small number of German speakers, approximately 40% being multilingual

[343] Bálint, Varga: *Multilingualism in urban Hungary, 1880–1910*; In: Nationalities Papers, 42:6, 2014, pp. 965-980.

- “Restructurizing multilingual” cities: Bratislava: German holds a slight majority, with Hungarian spoken by one-third of the population. Kassa: Hungarian is predominant with a slight majority, Slovak is spoken by one-third, and roughly half the population is monolingual, while the other half is multilingual
- “Cities with a permanent minority”: Nagyvárad: Less than half of the population speaks Hungarian, with a small number speaking Romanian, mostly in a monolingual context. Cluj: Predominantly Hungarian-speaking, with a small portion speaking Romanian. About half the population is monolingual, and the other half is multilingual
- “Constantly changing” cities: Arad: Approximately half of the population is Hungarian monolingual, with a small number speaking Romanian. The population is evenly split between monolingual and multilingual. Timisoara: Mainly German-speaking, with one-third Hungarian speakers. The population is mostly multilingual.

The study further indicates that in the Kingdom of Hungary, men had a higher proficiency in foreign languages compared to women, and a greater proportion of Jews were multilingual compared to Christians. The number of urban residents identifying as Hungarian speakers not only increased, but Hungarian became the exclusive language in public life across the surveyed cities. The only exceptions were Bratislava and Timișoara, where the German language continued to be used to a greater extent in specific cultural spaces. As the process of Hungarianization advanced, residents of these cities had diminishing reasons to acquire proficiency in foreign languages, leading to a notable rise in Hungarian monolingualism in these urban areas. This trend was observed with the exception of Szeged and Debrecen, which were predominantly monolingual from the outset. The paradox of the growing influence of Hungarianization contributing to the emergence of multilingualism is intriguing. Non-Hungarian native speakers were compelled to acquire proficiency in the official language of the state, particularly if they attended elementary school or had regular interactions with native Hungarian speakers in their daily lives and work. This process, in turn, influenced a family's linguistic competence for generations through gradual assimilation. In other words, aside from the centralised Magyarization initiatives by the state, specific economic and demographic factors, such as urbanisation, also played a role in the proliferation of the Hungarian

language.[344]

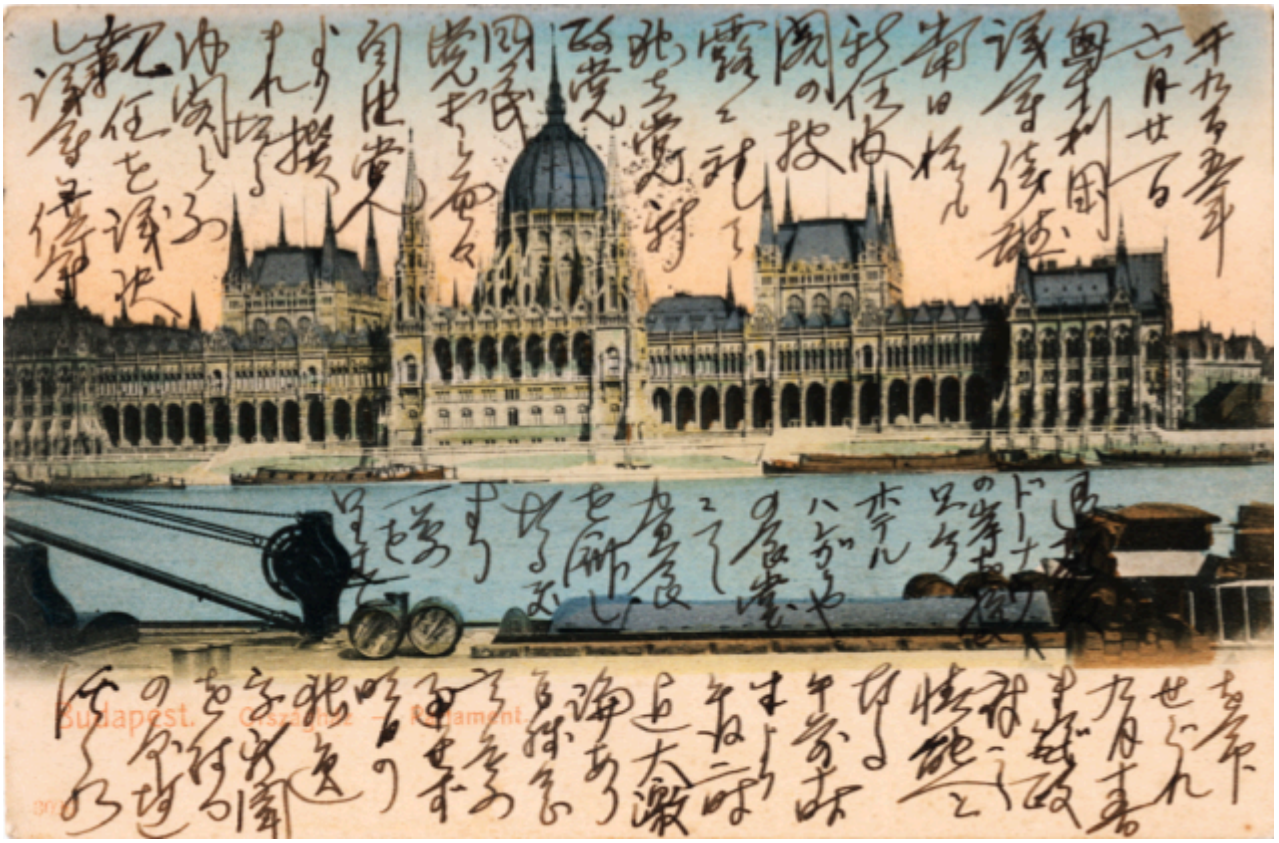
Postcard sent from Budapest to München by Zsófia Deutsch to Shinshichi Miura (三浦 新七), May 11, 1906 (山形大学附属博物館)

Urbanization and Budapest

Thanks to rapid urbanisation, the amalgamation of Buda, Óbuda, and Pest in 1873 resulted in the creation of a metropolis that measured up to European standards. The transformation of Budapest into a major metropolis in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was intricately linked to Hungary's distinctive political and social circumstances. The Compromise of 1867 facilitated the modernization and unification of Hungary, yet it took on a specific form, with Budapest evolving into a capitalist city under the influence of liberal aristocrats and a financial elite. While Budapest flourished as a modern metropolis, tensions arose between the cosmopolitan capital and the traditional regions of the country. Many perceived Budapest as foreign due to its assimilated Jewish and German financial elite, expanding middle class, and religious diversity. For some, it symbolised the

[344] Bálint, Varga: *Multilingualism in urban Hungary, 1880–1910*; In: Nationalities Papers, 42:6, 2014, pp. 977-978.

drawbacks of liberal capitalism.[345]



Postcard sent from Budapest to München by Kanesaburō Andō (安藤兼三郎) to Shinshichi Miura (三浦 新七), June 19, 1906 (山形大学附属博物館)

Public health situation

The rapid development was accompanied by an improvement in the public health situation of the new capital. In 1870, the rate of acute infections in Buda and Pest was 60 percent higher compared to western capitals, with incidents such as cholera epidemics occurring in Budapest in 1886 and 1892. Efforts to address these challenging conditions commenced with the Public Health Act of 1876. Subsequently, in 1890, vaccinations against smallpox and diphtheria were introduced. Two significant institutions were established to address modern metropolitan public health challenges: the Metropolitan Institute of Public Health and Bacteriology, and the Pasteur Institute. In 1894, the VIII. International Congress on Public Health and Demography took place in Budapest. According to contemporary opinions, "*within the framework of this congress, Hungary*

[345] Anita A. Kurimay: *Sex in the "Pearl of the Danube": The history of queer life, love and its regulation in Budapest, 1873-1941*; A Dissertation submitted to the Graduate School-New Brunswick Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2012, pp 9-12.

entered the community of European cultural nations as an equal participant, marking the end of Hungary's intellectual isolation from the more advanced West".[346] Tuberculosis became a major public health issue in Hungary, particularly in urban areas with overcrowding and industrial work. It was a leading cause of death, especially among the working class. The state's response was slow, with public health initiatives lagging until the 20th century, though sanatoriums were eventually established to treat the disease. Typhoid fever was also widespread, both in cities and rural areas, exacerbated by poor sanitation. Efforts to improve water and sewage systems were made, but progress was slow, and typhoid remained a persistent problem throughout the late 19th century. At this point, it might be interesting to compare the average life expectancy at birth in Vienna, Budapest, and different cities around the world in 1869 and 1900.

1869			**1900**		
Ranking	City	average life expectancy	Ranking	City	average life expectancy
1	London	36,4	1	Chicago	48,6
2	Philadelphia	36,2	2	Copenhagen	47,8
3	Bradford	36	3	Liége	45
4	Bristol	36	4	Philadelphia	44,4
5	Birmingham	35	5	Bradford	44
6	Newcastle	34	6	Boston (MA)	43,4
7	Sheffield	33	7	Antwerp	43,2
8	Krakow	29	8	Bristol	43
9	Manchester	29	9	New York	42,8
10	Córdoba	28,2	10	London	42,6
11	Vienna	26,6	11	Newcastle	42
12	Bueno Aires	26,4	12	Gent	41
13	Poznań	25,2	13	Berlin	41
14	Liverpool	25	14	Krakow	40,2
15	Budapest	18,5	15	Budapest	40,2
16			16	Vienna	39,1

Average life expectancy at birth in major cities around the world, based on a table created by Dániel Bolgár[347]

[346] Gracza Tünde: *Magyarország közegészségügyi állapota a korabeli magyar nyelvű orvosi szakfolyóiratok tükrében*, PhD értekezés. Pécs, 2010. pp. 40-41.
[347] Szécsényi Mihály (ed.): *Egy underground történész. Tanulmányok Lugosi András tiszteletére.* Gondolat, 2024., p.

Fishermen from Yokohama

Japan's external and internal issues in the second half of the 19th century

By the second half of the 19th century, Japan was already grappling with external and internal problems that originated from the seclusion policy of the Tokugawa bakufu from the 1630s to 1854.[348] The prolonged seclusion was essentially necessary so that the bakufu could maintain strict control and management over relations with foreign countries and some internal processes. They achieved this goal through various strict measures, including the prohibition of the practice of Christianity, the overseas travel of Japanese people, the restriction of foreign ship mooring, and the implementation of centralised supervision over internal and external trade, currency, information, and cultural influences from abroad. In this era, a well-defined system of relations evolved among more than 200 daimyo, the shogun, and the emperor. For instance, the shogun retained the authority to appoint daimyos, transfer disobedient and problematic daimyos, and confiscate their

196.

[348] Bakufu was the term for the Japanese shogunate, a form of military government established in 1603 with the appointment of Tokugawa Ieyasu as shogun. This governance structure persisted until 1867 when the shogunate government, led by the last shogun, Yoshinobu Tokugawa, was overthrown. The shoguns held authoritative control over the country, overshadowing the emperors, who predominantly occupied ceremonial roles and were regarded as the custodians of divine power.

territories, while occasionally granting additional territories to loyal daimyos. The classification of daimyo into different classes was based on their relationships with the Tokugawas.There were those with some form of blood or adopted relationship with the Tokugawas (approximately 23 daimyo, but only three of them had the right to nominate a shogun from among their own descendants if there was no direct or suitable heir to the ruler). These daimyo could occupy strategically significant territories on estates capable of generating significantly higher income compared to other areas. Examples of such estates included Owari (Nagoya), Kii (Wakayama), and Mito. The next class comprised 150 old, dependable vassals who were given territories of importance from a defence perspective. The third class encompassed around a hundred external, neutral, or even hostile daimyo who attained their status independently and could manage their estates, mostly located on the periphery of Japan, relatively autonomously. The common people were composed of four castes: warriors (samurai), peasants, craftsmen, and merchants, with outcasts positioned at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Drawing on Confucian teachings,[349] particularly the Neo-Confucian line, the Tokugawa period justified its rule. The philosophical framework of Neo-Confucianism played a pivotal role in shaping the social worldview of the era and legitimising governance. Based on this philosophy, societal harmony could only prevail if each member comprehended and dutifully fulfilled their assigned social functions. The dualistic perspective, encompassing relationships like ruler-subordinate and obligations arising from roles such as husband-wife and father-son, underscored the importance of obedience to authority, respect within marital relationships, and other social duties.

Education in Japan, the end of the Shogunate and the first part of the Meiji period

Confucian schools proliferated throughout Japan, with more than 200 such schools established by the 19th century, primarily to educate the samurai, the direct minions of the shogun. These schools placed special emphasis on principles such as order, obedience, and service to the family, community, and state. However, Confucianism proved to be a double-edged sword: if an untrustworthy or inept ruler failed

[349] The teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius, who lived in the 6th-5th century BC, emphasize that the prosperity of both the state and the individual must be founded on the principles of timeless order, patriarchal hierarchy, and the reciprocal responsibilities of both the ruler and the people.

to fulfil their duties adequately, they faced the risk of removal from their position. In the autumn of 1867, hundreds of thousands of dissatisfied Japanese, disenchanted with the shogunate's internal economic struggles and diminished credibility stemming from unpopular foreign relations, participated in unrestrained street festivals around Nagoya. A collective frenzy spread from Hiroshima to Edo (the capital). Men and women, adorned in flowing attire, cast aside their sorrows and inhibitions, engaging in dances and songs that depicted criticism of the shogunate. Symbolically, there was a location where the feudal Tokugawa system was ceremoniously interred in a coffin.[350] Some interpret this phenomenon, known as yonaoshi (世直し, world renewal), as a revolutionary act of the semi-proletariat, while others view it as an attempt by the emerging rural poor to renegotiate village life. In the latter perspective, "yonaoshi" served as a means for rural peasants to reinforce norms of mutuality and unity within the community.[351] Eventually, the days of the shogunate were numbered. At the close of 1867, insurgent samurai troops from the provinces of Satsuma, Chōshū, and Tosa embarked on a journey to Kyoto.

Without foreign rifles, the Chōshū challenge would have been harder to carry out. Their rise to power was aided in part by the import of British weapons. Small arms imports to Japan peaked in 1867, and the amount spent on guns surpassed that spent on ships, which were far more capital-intensive. Between 1866 and 1867, over 95% of the small arms imported into southwestern Japan came through European traders. The vast majority of the official weapons trade in Nagasaki was controlled by British, Dutch, and German merchants, who dominated the market. Two major firms accounted for more than half of the sales, and the top five held 72% of the market share, indicating a highly concentrated trade. The United States played only a minor role in this commerce. Most of the arms were sourced through established European trade networks in Asia or imported directly from Europe. In Yokohama, U.S. and French merchants had a stronger presence in the arms trade, alongside British, Dutch, German, and Swiss firms. Unlike Nagasaki, the link between foreign state diplomacy and government-driven trade was more evident at this port. The European arms trade supported both sides of the conflict. A French minister advised the shogunate between 1864 and 1868 and, through a French trading company, facilitated arms sales to the Tokugawa regime. When sixteen French cannons

[350] James L. McClain: *Japan: A Modern History*. W. W. Norton and Co., New York, 2001., pp. 150-152.
[351] Stephen Vlastos (ed.): *Mirror of Modernity – Invented Traditions of Modern Japan.* University of California Press 1998., p. 9.

arrived in Yokohama in June 1865, the shipment was so conspicuous that it alarmed envoys from other Western nations – especially British officials – who feared growing French influence in domestic affairs. Some domain leaders also viewed the shipment as a significant reinforcement of central Tokugawa authority.[352]

In January 1868, the insurgent samurai troops reached the imperial palace, where jubilant anti-Shogun court officials welcomed them. The then 15-year-old Emperor Meiji proclaimed the abolition of the shogunate. The insurgent samurai bolstered their forces with troops from Tosa, Hizen, and Echizen to repel the shogun's resistant forces towards Edo in 1868. While some daimyos loyal to the shogun in the northeastern part of Japan persisted until 1869, the last forces surrendered in the spring of that year. This marked the commencement of the Meiji era, predominantly associated with the names of members of the Chōshū and Satsuma clans, heralding significant civilizational changes.

To provide a broader perspective, it should be noted that by 1858, the Shogun's government (referred to as the Tycoon) was compelled to enter into treaties that opened key ports to international trade, a move that destabilized the domestic economy and threatened public order. To delay this, the Shogunate secured the London Protocol of 1862, which postponed the opening of major ports for another five years. Despite this delay, the crisis continued to escalate for the Tycoon. His authority as Japan's ruler was increasingly questioned, not only by the Western powers that had signed treaties with his regime, but also by factions within Japan itself. A diplomatic dispute with Britain, triggered by the killing of a merchant, led to the naval bombardment of Kagoshima in 1863. Similarly, in 1864, Shimonoseki was attacked after foreign ships were fired upon from shore-based artillery. The incident began when the Chōshū Domain, following an imperial order to expel foreigners, attacked Western ships passing through the Shimonoseki Straits. U.S. and French forces retaliated but could not secure safe passage for international trade. A joint Allied fleet, led by Britain, ultimately subdued Chōshū. British diplomacy then compelled the Tokugawa shogunate to pay three million dollars in indemnity. The indemnity payment was significantly delayed – though it was due by December 1866, it took nearly seven years to complete. The final installments were paid

[352] Harald Fuess: *The Global Weapons Trade and the Meiji Restoration – Dispersion of Means of Violence in a World of Emerging Nation-States*. In: Robert Hellyer, Harald Fuess (eds.): The Meiji Restoration – Japan as a global nation. 2020, Cambridge University Press, pp. 87.; 92-94.; Harald Fuess observes that, on the eve of the Restoration, the Tokugawa held twice as many advanced breech-loading rifles as their closest domain rival, Chōshū, and a greater total number of firearms than the combined forces of the Chōshū-Satsuma alliance. Harald Fuess: *The Global Weapons Trade and the Meiji Restoration – Dispersion of Means of Violence in a World of Emerging Nation-States*. In: Robert Hellyer, Harald Fuess (eds.): The Meiji Restoration – Japan as a global nation. 2020, Cambridge University Press, p. 91.

by the Meiji government, which had 'inherited' the obligation from the Tokugawa regime. In 1883, the United States returned its share of the Shimonoseki Indemnity to Japan. This gesture aimed to promote goodwill and strengthen diplomatic relations, reflecting U.S. support for Japan during its Meiji-era transformation.[353]

The last Tokugawa Shogun eventually relinquished his political power in November 1867, and shortly thereafter, the country descended into civil war. The samurai and leaders of Satsuma (modern-day Kagoshima) and Chōshū (modern-day Yamaguchi) emerged victorious, rallying around the imperial bloodline. In the final years of the Tokugawa shogunate, various factions debated how to respond to the threat of foreign domination and the declining legitimacy of the shogunate. One of the dominant ideological movements of the time was sonnō jōi (尊王攘夷) – "Revere the Emperor, Expel the Barbarians" – which called for the restoration of imperial authority and the expulsion of Western influence. A famous figure in this movement was Ryōma Sakamoto (坂本龍馬), originally a low-ranking samurai from the Tosa Domain. As Sakamoto came into contact with reform-minded leaders from powerful domains such as Satsuma and Chōshū, and as he was exposed to Western political thought, commerce, and naval technology in Nagasaki, his perspective began to evolve. This transformation culminated in the creation of the Kaientai (海援隊) in 1865, an organization that combined maritime, commercial, and paramilitary functions. Although it aligned with the broader anti-shogunate cause, the Kaientai diverged significantly from the hardline xenophobia of early sonnō jōi adherents. Rather than rejecting all foreign elements, the Kaientai actively embraced Western ships, navigation techniques, and firearms, viewing them as essential tools to strengthen Japan and ensure its sovereignty. The Kaientai acquired funding through multiple channels. While it was not an official arm of any domain, it received covert support from the Satsuma Domain, which had become a hub for modernization and resistance to Tokugawa rule. The Tosa Domain also provided limited backing, partly motivated by a desire to maintain influence over Sakamoto, one of its former retainers. Foreign merchants such as the Scottish arms dealer Thomas Blake Glover played a crucial intermediary role, supplying the Kaientai and its allies with ships and weapons. In addition, the Kaientai engaged in commercial shipping and arms transport, generating revenue through its own operations and functioning as one of Japan's first modern joint-stock companies. Further support came in the form of loans and informal

[353] Payson J. Treat: *The Return of the Shimonoseki Indemnity*. In: The Journal of Race Development , Jul., 1917, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Jul., 1917), pp. 9-12.

contributions from sympathetic samurai and wealthy merchants. Although the Kaientai is sometimes described as a militia, it was more accurately a flexible and forward-thinking organization that embodied a new vision for Japan's future. It operated Western-style ships, trained men in navigation, and took part in politically motivated transport and communications. The group also reflected Sakamoto's political shift: from radical rejection of foreign presence to a pragmatic embrace of modernization in service of national sovereignty. While it upheld the "Revere the Emperor" (尊王) component of sonnō Jōi, it ultimately rejected the simplistic "Expel the Barbarians" (攘夷) slogan, replacing it with a vision of strategic adaptation and institutional reform. Through the activities of the Kaientai and his own political brokerage – particularly in helping to form the Satsuma-Chōshū Alliance – Sakamoto played a critical role in dismantling the Tokugawa regime. Next to the Kaientai, another influential group within the anti-shogunate movement was the Seichū-gumi (精忠組), a faction formed by loyalist samurai from the Satsuma Domain. Comprised of figures such as Takamori Saigō (西郷隆盛) and Toshimichi Ōkubo (大久保利通), the Seichū-gumi was rooted in the same sonnō jōi ideology and initially advocated for the complete expulsion of foreigners and the restoration of imperial authority. Unlike the Kaientai, which quickly adopted a pragmatic stance toward Western knowledge and technology, the Seichū-gumi began with a more rigid, isolationist outlook. Yet, as Japan's crisis deepened and the threat of colonization became more tangible, its key members – like their counterparts in other domains – gradually shifted toward strategic modernization.

Long marginalized in Kyoto, the Imperial Court rose to prominence in 1868, leading a new political order in what is now known as the Meiji Restoration. By 1871, local rulers were ordered to relinquish their domains, receiving noble titles in exchange under the new regime. Japan was rapidly transforming into a centralized state. From the very beginning of Western trade in Japanese ports, Britain emerged as Japan's most significant commercial partner. In 1860, 55 percent of Western ships trading at Yokohama were British – this figure rose to 71 percent in 1861 and reached 81 percent by 1862. Over the following decades, British investment played a crucial role in Japan's early industrialization. Without its connections to British trade and financial systems, it is unlikely that Japan could have transformed so swiftly. Moreover, Britain's growing concern over a perceived Russian threat to its trade and political dominance in East Asia made Japan increasingly important. Therefore, cooperation with Japan extended beyond

economic interests. Modern Japanese scholars generally adhere to a well-established view when discussing the diplomatic relationships during the Meiji Restoration: the British supported the leaders of Satsuma and Chōshū, while the French backed the Tycoon's Government. This perspective has become a common framework in academic discourse on the period. The prevailing narrative in Japan regarding the Meiji Restoration is that the country was at risk of colonization. According to this view, Japan had to embrace rapid modernization to avoid being overtaken by Western powers. This struggle for modernization saw both the British and French involved in Japan's domestic affairs, with each supporting different factions – Satsuma-Chōshū and the Tycoon's Government, respectively. This idea has been deeply ingrained in modern Japanese historiography. However, in 1961, Japanese historian Takashi Ishii offered a different perspective, suggesting that the primary aim of Western diplomacy in Japan was economic rather than colonial. He argued that Western nations were focused on creating markets for their products and securing raw materials, and that they had no actual intention of colonizing Japan itself. Despite Ishii's claims, this view has not gained significant acceptance in Japanese historiography. A more recent re-evaluation and analysis by Tsuyoshi Sakakibara shows that the Meiji Restoration "*largely began as a result of Japan's integration into the system of international trade*".[354]

The Meiji leaders, upon assuming power, faced the imperative of swift institutional modernization, necessitating a robust economic and industrial foundation as well as military strength informed by Western experience. Simultaneously, they undertook the formidable task of transforming the rigid feudal social framework. While the West served as a model for state organisation, Japan, rooted in Chinese origins and Confucian philosophy, blended European knowledge with its traditional Chinese heritage. The bureaucratic system was fashioned on German and French models. Japan had long operated within a fragmented territorial and economic structure, but as part of the administrative reform in 1871, the country was reorganised into 47 prefectures. In 1872, mandatory population registration (koseki) was introduced, and legislation defined the monetary levy of the agricultural crop tax, along with the establishment of regulations for the free sale and purchase of land. In 1872, Japan transitioned from the lunar calendar to the Gregorian calendar. Political parties were established in 1880, but the implementation of a democratic system grounded in people's representation faced challenges. The

[354] Tsuyoshi Sakakibara: *The Collapse of Tokugawa Japan and the role of Sir Ernest Satow in the Meiji Restoration, 1853-1869*. King's College London, 2015, pp. 6-22.; 332.

adoption of such a system posed a threat to the fragile foundations of both governmental and imperial institutions.[355] Japan was under provisional government rule until 1885, and the first election occurred in 1890. The parliament was established with the emperor's authorization, and government members were elected with his approval. Throughout the Meiji period, Japanese nationalism strengthened, fueled by external threats and fears of a potential semi-colonial or colonial future, coupled with an ambivalent relationship with China from the 19th to the middle of the 20th century. The ideology of Japanese nationalism, gaining momentum during this period, was rooted in the concept of national unity symbolized by the divine Japanese emperor, as outlined in the first constitution adopted in 1889. The imperial institution served to legitimize the government, and in the hands of the government, the most significant cohesive force influencing society was the ideological pressure from above, manifested through institutions, education, and the bureaucratic apparatus. The caste-based social stratification that persisted in previous centuries was abolished in 1871. In the late 1870s, the transforming elite, seeking to consolidate support and win over key figures, established a new nobility system modelled after European examples. As an illustration, all former daimyos were granted the title of Marquis. The title of Duke was primarily conferred upon members of the leading elite, while the title of Baron could be bestowed upon distinguished and loyal bureaucrats, as well as individual members of the social and economic elite.[356]

Miniature Japanese farming tool models (Heinrich Siebold, 1872, Weltmuseum)

As the Meiji government sought to establish Japan as a modern nation-state, it recognized the need for a comprehensive legal system that would align with international

[355] James L. McClain: *Japan: A Modern History*. W. W. Norton and Co., New York, 2001., p. 369.
[356] Muraközy László: *A japán rejtély – Útteremtő csodák és végzetes zsákutcák* Akadémiai Kiadó, 2016., p. 74.

standards and facilitate economic development. The codification of civil and commercial law was particularly important for securing equal footing with Western powers and ending the system of extraterritoriality,[357] which allowed foreign nationals to be tried under their own laws rather than Japanese jurisdiction. The Meiji Civil Code and the Meiji Commercial Code were crucial components of Japan's legal modernization during the Meiji era. The drafting of these codes was therefore a key step in Japan's broader efforts to reform its institutions and assert legal sovereignty. Tomoya Sano analyzed foreign references in the drafting of the Meiji Civil Code (between 1896 and 1898) and the Meiji Commercial Code (in 1899), demonstrating that Japan's legal scholars and policymakers drew heavily on foreign legal systems, particularly those of Western Europe. Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, and the Netherlands were the primary sources of influence for both codes. While major Western European countries were commonly referenced, it is noteworthy that Hungary and Romania also played a role in the drafting process, particularly in the Meiji Civil Code. The limited influence of Hungary and Romania can be attributed to the absence of a comprehensive civil code in either country at the time. Although Hungary had standalone laws concerning family law, it remains unclear whether these were deliberately excluded from the references or simply inaccessible. On the other hand, Hungary's legal system contributed to the Meiji Civil Code in a different way, as all references to Hungary pertained exclusively to the Hungarian Commercial Code. The case of Austria further illustrates the selective nature of references in the Meiji legal codes. Unlike Hungary, Austria did not have an independent commercial code, which may explain why it was not referenced in that domain. As Sano demonstrates, the drafting of the Meiji codes was characterized by a strategic preference for well-established and codified legal systems, reflecting Japan's deliberate effort to modernize its legal framework through the selective adaptation of European legal traditions.[358]

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[357] Extraterritoriality means a state extends its legal authority beyond its own borders. Foreigners with these rights are partly exempt from local courts but are instead subject to courts set up by their own country. So it involves both immunity from local law and continued legal control by their home state. Extraterritoriality in Japan was fully established only in 1869, nearly a decade after Yokohama opened. While extraterritorial practices had a long history in Europe and Japan – such as in the early seventeenth century, when the English East India Company established a trading post in Hirado and its chief factor, was granted the privilege of trying and punishing English offenders under Japanese law – and the Edo period's multiple jurisdictions, the Bakumatsu government initially viewed it as less problematic. From 1865 onward, however, Japanese authorities increasingly saw extraterritoriality as a major issue and sought its removal from the treaties. Notably, extraterritoriality lasted much longer in China than in Japan, ending only in 1943 due to wartime pressures that led the Allies and Japan to upgrade their Chinese allies' status. In contrast, Japan abolished extraterritorial rights around 1900 after implementing legal reforms that met Western expectations. This contrast is often viewed as a sign of China's lag and Japan's progress toward modernity.

[358] 佐野智也『外国法の参照に関する明治民法と明治商法の比較』In: 名古屋大学法政論集 274. 2017. p. 63., 65., 67.

Modernization in Japan was not merely a process of Westernization; rather, it was a complex period of coexistence between different values and options, particularly from the late Edo to early Meiji period. During this time, knowledge had to be curated, merged, and disseminated across all levels of society. The acceptance of foreign ideas, scholarship, and cultures was not a sudden development of the Meiji era, but had deep historical roots, particularly in Japan's long-standing engagement with Chinese knowledge and traditions. Importantly, the Meiji Restoration did not entirely reject or erase the legacy of the previous era. During the late Edo period, the shogunate actively translated Western encyclopedias,[359] following a tradition that had existed since the 17th and 18th centuries, when Japanese scholars adapted Chinese encyclopedias by adding local content. These encyclopedias played a crucial role in the dissemination of knowledge for nearly 200 years and even saw a condensed version published in the Meiji period. Advances in printing technology, particularly the development of movable type in the 17th century, made large works more affordable and widely accessible. Alongside these, simplified dictionaries, practical guides for daily life, agricultural manuals, and technical books were also published for the general public. China had a much earlier tradition of illustrated encyclopedias compared to Europe, owing to its advanced printing technology, which began with woodblock printing in the 7th century and movable type in the 11th century. (By contrast, Europe adopted movable type only in the 15th century.) In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Japanese scholars began translating Latin and Dutch texts. After the Meiji Restoration, the Ministry of Education continued this effort by translating Western encyclopedias, publishing them under the title *Encyclopedia* (百科全書), and simultaneously compiling *Kojiruien* (古事類苑), a Japanese-style encyclopedia. Institutional support for Western learning expanded in 1855 with the establishment of a Western learning institute in Kanda Hitotsubashi, based on the Foreign Books Reconciliation Office (later renamed the Foreign Books Translation Office in 1866). This development placed increasing demands on interpreters and scholars, who were tasked with translating foreign texts, diplomatic documents, and teaching at newly established Western-style schools. In the early Meiji period, full-scale translations of Western encyclopedias commenced. One notable example was the translation of W. and R. Chambers' *Information for the People* (1857), which the Ministry of Education published between 1873 and 1884. Given the time

[359] Encyclopedias are structured systems of knowledge that reflect the intellectual, cultural, and societal landscape of their time. Their translation is not simply a linguistic task but an act of cultural transmission, signifying the adaptation and integration of foreign academic traditions into local frameworks.

and financial constraints of translating entire encyclopedias, only the most essential entries were selected, with no additional commentary included. A total of 90 volumes were published. The launch of this translation effort coincided with the introduction of Japan's modern school system in 1872, indicating that the project was a deliberate component of educational reform.[360]

In the late 19th century, as modernization accelerated worldwide, the absorption of technology and literacy in technical fields became crucial. To effectively adopt the machines, tools, and innovations of the Industrial Revolution, countries needed to translate technical knowledge into their native languages. A 2024 study[361] highlights Japan's exceptional success in industrializing during the first wave of globalization. In 1870, 84% of all technical books were written in just four languages: English, French, German, and Italian. By 1910, however, Japan had produced more translated technical books than France had in original works, making Japanese the second-most common language for technical publications after French. To facilitate the technical transition, the Japanese government launched large-scale dictionary projects to establish a standardized technical vocabulary. It also subsidized the translation of Western technical books, greatly expanding their availability. In 1856, the government founded the Institute of Barbarian Books (蕃書調所, Bansho Shirabesho), which was responsible for compiling English-Japanese dictionaries to support technical translation. This initiative marked the beginning of a far-reaching state effort to absorb Western scientific and technological knowledge. State-employed translators played a critical role in this process, making up 74% of all technical translators – demonstrating the government's strong commitment. The results were striking: while only eight Western technical books had been translated into Japanese between 1500 and 1860, this number soared to 608 by 1900. About a decade after the publication of dictionaries and technical books, Japan's manufacturing sector expanded rapidly, with the share of manufactured exports rising from 20–30% to 60%. Economic historians widely agree that Japan was the only non-Western economy to successfully industrialize during this period. In addition to translation efforts, the Meiji government actively recruited foreign experts, hiring thousands of instructors and advisors. The majority came from Britain, the U.S., France, and Germany, reflecting Japan's preference for

[360] 伊藤 真実子『19世紀日本の知の潮流―江戸後期～明治初期の百科事典、博物学、博覧会』In: 19世紀学研究 6, 2012-03. pp. 59-71.

[361] Juhász, Réka and Sakabe, Shogo and Weinstein, David E.: *Codification, Technology Absorption, and the Globalization of the Industrial Revolution* (July 2024). NBER Working Paper No. w32667, pp. 2-18. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=4894661

expertise from English-, French-, and German-speaking countries. In the early years of the Meiji era (1868–1873), Japan struggled with the competence of its foreign employees, as a large number of unqualified individuals secured positions through self-solicitation, particularly those already residing in Japan's port cities. While employees hired from abroad were generally of higher quality, foreign governments maintained jurisdiction over their nationals working in Japan, often favoring them in disputes. This left the Japanese government with limited disciplinary power, as any legal cases were tried in consular courts, which invariably ruled against Japan until 1875. Additionally, Japan suffered financial losses due to contractual obligations, as early agreements, often written or influenced by foreign consuls, required full salary payments even when employees were dismissed for incompetence. Although the Foreign Ministry attempted to shorten contract terms, resistance from both foreign employees and Japanese officials led to continued challenges. Over time, Japan adapted by ensuring contracts and receipts were written in Western languages to be recognized in disputes. Meanwhile, foreign experts, particularly technicians and educators, received high salaries, with technical specialists earning $300–$400 per month and foreign language teachers, including members of nobility, receiving $200. The employment of foreigners in Japan peaked between 1874 and 1875, with government records documenting over eight hundred foreign employees annually. A decline followed in 1877–78, reducing the number to between five and six hundred. This level remained relatively stable through the financial retrenchment of the 1880s, which further reduced foreign employment to a steady minimum of around two hundred per year by 1886, with only slight decreases continuing through 1892. Many of these foreign experts were employed at newly established universities, further accelerating Japan's technological and industrial development. Besides employing foreign experts, the Meiji government funded Japanese students to study abroad, as domestic expertise in STEM fields was still scarce.[362]

Translations of foreign works raised an international legal issue. In the late 19th century, the expansion of global trade and publishing spurred the need for international copyright laws, leading to the Berne Convention in 1886, initiated by France, Germany, Britain, Italy, Spain, and other European nations. Japan showed little interest in copyright

[362] Juhász, Réka and Sakabe, Shogo and Weinstein, David E.: *Codification, Technology Absorption, and the Globalization of the Industrial Revolution* (July 2024). NBER Working Paper No. w32667, pp. 2-18. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=4894661; Hazel J. Jones: *The Formulation of the Meiji Government Policy Toward the Employment of Foreigners*. In: Monumenta Nipponica, 1968, Vol. 23, No. 1/2 (1968), pp. 13-17.; 20-21.; 28.

protection but faced growing pressure from European powers. Japan enacted its first copyright law in 1893. Even so, external demands, particularly from Britain and Germany, pushed the Meiji government to join the Berne Convention in 1899, in part to facilitate the end of the unequal treaties imposed by the West. Japan's accession was driven more by diplomacy than a genuine commitment to copyright norms, and it continued to resist restrictive measures, especially on translation rights. At the same time, Japan's domestic publishing industry strongly opposed the Berne Convention, fearing it would limit their ability to profit from the free reproduction and translation of foreign works, which had been a significant part of their business model. At the 1908 revision conference, Japan's bid for free translation rights failed, but it secured key exemptions, including a ten-year translation right and no royalties for the public performance of foreign musical works. While formally part of the international copyright system, Japan's engagement remained pragmatic, prioritizing national interests over full adherence to global standards. Interestingly, this issue has not received much attention in foreign policy studies on Japan, despite its significance in shaping Japan's approach to international copyright law.[363]

From another perspective, modernization was synonymous with industrialization. The Meiji government initially envisioned industrialization as a means to strengthen the state, prioritizing industries essential for nation-building, such as construction materials like bricks, cement, and glass, as well as military-related sectors, including iron, steel, and shipbuilding. Additionally, key export industries such as raw silk and mining were seen as crucial. To implement this vision, the government took control of modern industries previously owned by the Tokugawa shogunate and regional clans, acquiring military arsenals, shipyards, and textile mills. However, this vision diverged from reality in several ways. Japan remained an agricultural society where indigenous industries dominated the economy. The targeted industrial sectors did not align with the country's actual export and import structure, and state-run factories faced operational difficulties. Exhibits at international fairs mainly showcased raw materials, traditional crafts, and natural resources rather than modern industrial products. A turning point came with the Iwakura Mission, which traveled abroad to study Western industrialization. The mission concluded that while Japan lagged behind, catching up was entirely feasible, influencing the course of industrial policy in the following years. Recognizing that industrial knowledge among the population

[363] Maj Hartmann: *Politics in Publishing – Japan and the Globalization of Intellectual Property Rights, 1890s-1971*. Leuven University Press, 2024. pp. 29-62.

was limited and private industry had yet to develop, the government saw the need for direct guidance. Traditional industries were declining, domestic production remained low, and a persistent trade deficit underscored the economy's weakness. While the original industrialization strategy remained in place, the focus gradually shifted towards reducing imports and increasing exports. Indigenous industries, previously overlooked, were now actively promoted, and greater emphasis was placed on encouraging private-sector involvement. Nevertheless, both government officials and manufacturers still lacked a deep understanding of various industries, leading to continued challenges. The gap between ideals and reality was evident at industrial exhibitions. At the 1876 Philadelphia World Fair, Japan primarily exhibited traditional ceramics, while the 1877 First National Industrial Exhibition, which the government had positioned as a showcase of industrial progress, featured few modern products aside from a spinning machine and coal extracted with new technology. Despite these shortcomings, policymakers increasingly recognized that private-sector-led industrialization was the most viable path forward. A new phase began in the 1880s, marking a departure from state-led industrialization. The private sector emerged as the main driver of economic growth, while the government shifted from direct involvement to an indirect role, focusing on improving conditions for industrial development. Instead of attempting to create industries from scratch, policy now centered on enhancing quality and allowing industrialization to evolve in line with economic realities. This shift sparked a surge in company formation, fueled by monetary stability, financial system reforms, capital accumulation, cheap labor, and improvements in infrastructure such as railways, ports, and postal services. Additionally, the development of a legal framework, including trademarks, patents, and financial instruments, further supported economic expansion. As a result, the trade balance turned to surplus, with imports decreasing and exports rising. Japan's industrial progress became increasingly visible in national exhibitions. By 1890, the Third National Industrial Exhibition displayed machine-made silk, copper goods, and Western-style shoes, while the 1895 Fourth National Industrial Exhibition showcased electric machines, reflecting growing technological sophistication. By this point, Japan had gained confidence in its industrial achievements, leading to a gradual decline in participation at foreign exhibitions. After the 1893 Chicago World Exposition, the Meiji government ceased exhibiting at such events altogether, signaling that Japan had established itself as an emerging industrial power.[364] It

[364] Izumi Ohno, Kimiaki Jin, Kuniaki Amatsu, Junichi Mori (eds.): *Introducing Foreign Models for Development – Japanese Experience and Cooperation in the Age of New Technology,* Springer, 2024. pp 85-93.

is worth noting that an intriguing 'afterlife' of Meiji industrialization became evident in state-promoted remembrance politics from the mid-2010s. On January 17, 2014, the Japanese government nominated the “Sites of Japan’s Meiji Industrial Revolution”, particularly those related to iron and steel, shipbuilding, and coal mining industries, for the World Heritage List. The nomination was successful, and the sites were inscribed on July 5, 2015. This initiative aimed to revitalize nostalgic memories of Japan’s national legacy; however, it also attracted international criticism, particularly from South Korea and China, due to the association of some sites with forced labor during Japan's occupation of these countries.[365]

Education was another pillar of modernization. Compulsory elementary education was introduced in 1872, though many Japanese parents initially resisted sending their children to government schools. Government pressure soon overcame this reluctance, especially among non-elite families, and the enrollment rate for boys and girls increased significantly, from 39.9 percent of boys and 15.1 percent of girls in 1874 to 58.2 percent of boys and 22.6 percent of girls by 1879. By 1890, enrollment had reached 90.6 percent for boys and 71.7 percent for girls. These schools provided high quality education, meeting international standards of the time. In 1880, government expenditures on education in Japan accounted for 11 percent of the national budget.[366] Foreign education models in Japan initially leaned toward the French system but were quickly abandoned due to curriculum issues, funding problems, and public opposition. The American model that replaced it was also short-lived, as it faced criticism from educators who favored a more critical approach to Western models. Instead, a German-style system of centralized, compulsory education with equal opportunity emerged as a more influential option, contrasting with the decentralized, non-compulsory approach that had been proposed. Japan's shift toward German education in the early 1880s was part of an international trend, influenced by the quality and accessibility of the German university education system.[367]

The early Meiji state aimed for “civilization and enlightenment” (bunmei kaika 文明開

[365] Nakano, Ryoko: *Mobilizing Meiji Nostalgia and Intentional Forgetting in Japan’s World Heritage Promotion*. In: International Journal of Asian Studies 18, no. 1 (2021) pp. 27–44.
[366] Juhász, Réka and Sakabe, Shogo and Weinstein, David E.: *Codification, Technology Absorption, and the Globalization of the Industrial Revolution* (July 2024). NBER Working Paper No. w32667, pp. 8-10. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=4894661
[367] Erik Grimmer-Solem: *German Social Science, Meiji Conservatism, and the Peculiarities of Japanese History.* In: Journal of World History, Vol. 16, No. 2. 2005. p. 202.; 204.

化), prompting intellectuals to consider how to modernize the population, including women.[368] Previously on the political periphery, women became more involved in the workforce, initially in textile factories, then as teachers, and later in various urban service roles by the early 20th century. This shift coincided with the rise of jogaku zasshi (女學雜誌, women's education publications), which were edited by men in positions of power, such as government officials and religious leaders. From the mid-1890s, some women took leadership in journalism and social organizations, but it would take until the 1920s for significant progress in women's political rights. The state-sanctioned model of ryōsai kenbo (良妻賢母)[369] positioned women as "double subjects" of the household and the state. Women were also positioned as guardians of tradition and the household, in contrast to men, whose public image was associated with Western ideals of enlightenment and rationality.[370] Some women's rights activists, particularly nationalist or militarist feminists, sought to appeal to the Meiji state for women's equality, arguing that women's contributions in times of national crisis, such as the Russo-Japanese War, demonstrated their value to the state. While this argument had potential, it was often undermined by the male-dominated Imperial Diet, which was unlikely to support women's political rights due to prejudice or vested interests.[371] Women's education during the Meiji era included a peculiar element with the incorporation of Western eugenics into the curriculum.[372] The main proponent of these ideas was Naruse Jinzo (1858-1919), an educator who advocated for "race improvement" through women's higher education, which he believed was essential for Japan's modernization. Naruse argued that educating women would elevate the nation's civilization level, and he used Western eugenic principles to promote his cause starting in the 1880s through various women's education publications. He proposed creating a "race

[368] See: Mara Patessio: *Women and Public Life in Early Meiji Japan*. University of Michigan 2011.
[369] a Meiji-era ideal that defined women as "good wives and wise mothers", emphasizing their roles as devoted domestic caretakers and moral educators of future generations to support national modernization
[370] Manuel Schilcher: *Inventing the Kimono - Ways the West created a Japanese tradition*. Atelier Furusato, p. 8. http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16507.94248
[371] Qin Yang: *Imai Utako and Her Contemporaries: A Survey into Intellectual Allegiance in the Early Feminist Movement in Late Meiji Japan, ca. 1900-1910*. History Thesis 2017. pp. 2-10.; 59.
[372] Eugenics is a set of beliefs and practices aimed at improving the genetic quality of the human population. This is typically pursued through selective breeding, or encouraging the reproduction of individuals with *desirable traits* while discouraging or preventing those with undesirable traits from reproducing. Eugenics has been historically linked to both social and racial ideologies, often advocating for the superiority of certain groups over others. While some proponents of eugenics claimed it would lead to healthier, more intelligent populations, the practice has been widely discredited and condemned due to its associations with discrimination, forced sterilizations, and human rights abuses, particularly in the early 20th century. In late nineteenth-century Britain and the United States, the idea of improving human breeding for scientific advancement was frequently linked to discussions on sex education and the emancipation of women. See: Robertson, Jennifer. 2002: *Blood Talks: Eugenic Modernity and the Creation of New Japanese.*. In: History and Anthropology 13 (3). pp. 191–216. doi:10.1080/0275720022000025547

improvement" department in women's universities and founded Japan Women's College (Nihon Joshi Daigaku, 日本女子大学) in 1901, where eugenic ideas were introduced by prominent scientists. Naruse's commitment to women's education led him to popularize eugenics, merging it with ideas of women's emancipation and Western sex education. He believed that by improving the physical condition of Japanese women, the nation could enhance future generations, thereby strengthening Japan as a whole.[373]

Eugenic debates in Japan in the mid-1880s revolved around two opposing views on racial improvement, known as Jinshu Kairyō (人種改良). The first, the 'mixed-blood' (混血論, konketsu ron) position, argued that racial traits were biologically inherent, and the most effective way to enhance Japan's racial stock was through intermarriage between Japanese men and white women (kōhaku zakkon / 黄白雑婚, "marriage of yellow and white"). Proponents believed such unions would produce 'physically and mentally superior offspring', fundamentally transforming the Japanese people to 'match Westerners'. Notably, this view focused exclusively on men, differing from later eugenic models. The 'pure-blood' position (純血論, junketsu ron), in contrast, rejected race mixing, citing uncertainty about racial classification and unpredictable consequences. Opponents warned that such intermarriage would undermine Japanese identity, leading to hybrid offspring of ambiguous status. Instead, they advocated for improvements in lifestyle, diet, hygiene, and physical education as the means to strengthen the Japanese race. Some extended this idea into a broader racial hygiene framework, linking national health and cleanliness to racial purity. Ultimately, the early Meiji racial improvement debate was a Japanese response to racial hierarchy, shaped by Japan's concern over its status relative to the West rather than simply mirroring Western racial discourse.[374]

The status of women and the legal measures introduced concerning them during the Meiji era provide another important perspective on modernization. In 1873, the Japanese government prohibited women from cutting their hair, aiming to prevent the adoption of men-like short hairstyles. Traditional Japanese women's hairstyles were criticized for their complexity and maintenance, which often led to hygiene issues such as lice, hair loss, and headaches. The 'hairstyle-reform' was part of a broader 'sokuhatsu movement' (the term 束

[373] Otsubo, Sumiko, and James R. Bartholomew: *Eugenics in Japan: Some Ironies of Modernity, 1883–1945.* In: Science in Context 11.3–4 (1998) pp. 545–551.
[374] Subodhana Wijeyeratne: *Marrying Up: the Race Improvement Debate in Japan, 1880-1900.* https://www.academia.edu/30105283/Marrying_Up_the_Race_Improvement_Debate_in_Japan_1880_1900 (Accessed: 2025 March) pp. 3-5.; 14-17.

髪 refers to the traditional Japanese practice of arranging a woman's hair in a knot or coil at the back of the head) promoting Western-style grooming as Japan modernized. In 1883, the Ministry of Education banned women from wearing men's clothing, prompting the redesign of masculine garments like the ‘Sendaihira hakama’ (仙台平袴), which had also been worn by some women, into more feminine, skirt-like forms. This shift was part of a wider movement toward dress reform, influenced by the desire to present a modern, unified image to Western visitors. Western clothing, which blended styles from various European nations, was initially worn by lower-class women, particularly prostitutes, who were often derogatorily called ‘rashamen’ (‘wool women’). In 1886, the Meiji Empress mandated that women at court wear Western attire for imperial functions, defending the change by arguing that Western-style clothing was more aligned with Japan’s indigenous traditions than the old Chinese-inspired garments.[375]

During the Meiji era, some Japanese women engaged in prostitution as part of broader labor migration patterns, though this clashed with state modernization efforts and the ideals of ryōsai kenbo (良妻賢母, 'good wife, wise mother'). The visibility of Japanese sex workers abroad threatened Japan’s modern image, leading elites to label them kaigai shugyōfu (海外修行婦, 'disreputable women abroad') as a means of social control. The epicenter of this largely illegal migration was Kyushu, driven by coal exports, steamship travel, and labor migration networks. Many poor rural women traveled covertly to Singapore and Hong Kong, evading government restrictions by boarding postal, cargo, and passenger ships. Despite licensing caps and inspections, Japanese consuls found these measures ineffective, as colonial authorities were reluctant to disrupt trade. This migration also fueled the rise of zegen (是間, 'procurers'), who smuggled and guided women abroad for a fee. Bill Mihalopoulos offers an alternative perspective to the prevailing negative view of prostitution: within their home villages, these women were not seen as outcasts but as an accepted part of economic and social life.[376]

Barbara Molony argues that to avoid being seen as 'barbaric' and 'embarrassing,' Japanese women were encouraged to abandon traditional gender markers, such as blackened teeth and shaved eyebrows, which Westerners found 'strange'. The empress set an example in 1873 by appearing in public with natural eyebrows and unblackened

[375] Rebecca Copeland: *Fashioning the Feminine: Images of the Modern Girl Student in Meiji Japan.* In: U.S.-Japan Women's Journal No. 30/31 (2006), pp. 6-16.
[376] Bill Mihalopoulos: *Women, Overseas Sex Work and Globalization in Meiji Japan.* In: The Asia-Pacific Journal, Vol 10, Issue 35, No. 1, August 27, 2012.; pp. 1-3.; 8.; 10.; 18.

teeth, signaling the new style. In the late nineteenth century, the adoption of Western-style dress in Japan had meanings beyond modernity and citizenship, specifically symbolizing Japanese power and masculinity. Following the Meiji Restoration, the new military adopted Western uniforms to create a modern image of Japanese masculinity. The samurai's traditional hairstyles and clothing were discarded after the government's victory over samurai rebels in the 1870s. The Meiji emperor also shifted his public image, changing his dress, hair, and posture to embody Western masculinity. Dress reform became part of Japan's modernization efforts, aiming to improve its image in the eyes of the West. This included policies on proper attire and modesty, especially following complaints from Westerners about the semi-nudity of male rickshaw pullers and laborers. In 1871, the government required men working in public spaces to wear more appropriate clothing to avoid being seen as "barbaric". Along with changes in dress, samurai-style topknots were replaced with contemporary Western hairstyles after 1872. Official dress codes required men interacting with Westerners or attending government functions to wear Western attire, signaling Japan's move away from traditional court styles, which were seen as effeminate and too influenced by Chinese culture. In the 1870s, private citizens who wore Western clothing were seen as participating in Japan's modernization and enlightenment. Initially, this was limited to men, who were expected to adopt polite behavior and dress to demonstrate Japan's progress. Once they returned home, many would change back into traditional kimonos for comfort. Early attempts at wearing Western clothes in the 1860s and early 1870s were often awkward, with people mixing Western items, like top hats and umbrellas, with traditional Japanese attire. The 'Meiji dress code' also had colonial implications. After Taiwan became a Japanese colony in 1895, the imperial government sent scholars to document local dress as a sign of civilization or "backwardness". Taiwanese, who wore minimal clothing before Chinese influence, were considered less civilized by the Japanese. The Japanese, in their Western attire, used photography to highlight the "backwardness" of Taiwanese dress, aiming to assert their superiority and distance themselves from the "effeminate" Qing influences on Taiwanese clothing.[377]

The Meiji modernization process came at a significant social cost, producing both winners and losers. After the 1868 Restoration resolved the political conflict over loyalty to the emperor or the Tokugawa regime, debates over loyalty to tradition persisted. The 1877

[377] Barbara Molony: *Gender, Citizenship, and Dress in Modernizing Japan.* In: M. Roces & L. Edwards (Eds), The Politics of Dress in Asia and the Americas. London, UK: Sussex Academic Press 2007. pp. 82-89.

Satsuma Rebellion, led by Takamori Saigō, symbolized resistance to modernization, and although it failed, opposition to state reforms continued through movements like the Freedom and People's Rights Movement of the 1880s. Many remained skeptical of Western civilization, fearing its impact on Japan's spiritual and cultural integrity. The government's motto of "civilization and enlightenment" was tempered by the call for "Japanese spirit, Western learning". By the 1890s, amid rising nationalism after the Sino-Japanese War, admiration for traditional culture grew stronger, and ambivalence toward Westernization became embedded in mainstream cultural expression.[378] Society became increasingly divided along urban-rural and modernist-traditionalist lines, with rural communities and traditionalist factions disproportionately disadvantaged. Aligning with modernity often deepened socioeconomic gaps, leaving a larger share of people behind. As W. Puck Brecher writes in his paper, nation-building initiatives during this period institutionalized exclusion, expanding social opportunities while simultaneously narrowing acceptable behaviors. Ironically, "*the country's dramatic efforts to modernize (...) were ultimately implemented through measures that violated the spirit of the modern – namely, initiatives that marginalized broad sectors of Meiji society (1868–1912). After all, state structures, institutions, and ideologies could be cloned easily enough, but smothering the dissident energies fomenting below was a longer, messier business. Doing so required eradicating cultural autonomy and subjecting cultural forms (kabuki, dance, music, fiction, poetry, painting) to ideological overhaul. (...) The Meiji project proved disorienting for most, mortally threatening for some. Yet the latter, these "useless" arbiters of a failed past, played a critical role in the Japanese enlightenment (kaika). Their exclusion helped to animate the modern by defining and anchoring the boundaries of modern normalcy. Individual empowerment coexisted with diminishing tolerance for individuality.*"[379] The government fostered new knowledge paradigms yet marginalized nonconformists as social misfits (the Meiji vocabulary for those people were: zoku 賊: robber, traitor, enemy, or murderer; muyōsha 無用者: useless person; haibokusha 敗北者 and make 負け: loser). Ultimately, sovereignty and national identity were constructed through exclusionary mechanisms, making marginalization a key strategy of modernization. At the outset, modernization was neither well understood nor widely embraced by the Japanese population. Many viewed the Restoration with skepticism, as it reinforced preexisting social

[378] W. Puck Brecher: *Contested Utopias: Civilization and Leisure in the Meiji Era*. In: Asian Ethnology Volume 77, Numbers 1&2 • 2018, pp. 46–47.
[379] W. Puck Brecher: *Useless Losers: Marginality and Modernization in Early Meiji Japan.* The European Legacy 17 (6) 2012. p. 804. doi:10.1080/10848770.2012.715811.

hierarchies rather than fulfilling promises of egalitarian reform. The very day the Charter Oath was proclaimed in 1868, prohibitions against Christianity and factional petitioning were reasserted, and punitive measures were taken against military units advocating tax relief for peasants. Rather than benefiting from modernization, rural communities bore its costs – funding new schools, supporting the military, and enduring conscription from 1873 onward. As urban-rural disparities widened, rural inhabitants increasingly equated Western "enlightenment" with urban luxuries and foreign impositions, fueling widespread resistance. Some villages actively boycotted Western goods and ideologies well into the 1880s. This alienation fueled anxieties that reframed foreign concepts through myth and superstition. Telegraph poles resembling crucifixes were feared as Christian magic, and Western-style hospitals were rumored to harvest organs from unaware patients.[380] Even with mandatory education and conscription laws, school attendance remained below 50% until 1891, and military compliance only improved around the same time. Though the government formally dismantled the hereditary class system, its wholesale rejection of cultural traditions created a new marginalized class – those whose professions or philosophies rendered them obsolete. Under the guise of modernization, these policies curtailed individuals' ability to navigate society, undermining their social agency rather than integrating them into the modern state.[381]

During the Meiji era, nation-building became a central focus. While politically active samurai and wealthy peasants played key roles, Japan initially lacked a strong, unified national identity. The modern Japanese nation-building project was shaped by three key elements: indigenous nativism as a vision of a national religious utopia, living tradition reflecting cultural and social diversity, and European nationalism encouraging the selective use of tradition within a modern state. Traditionalism thus reconciled Japanese cultural developments with global nation-building trends in the late nineteenth century. Shintō played a central role, as it was simplified and reframed as the authentic Japanese religion, eventually becoming, in the Meiji and Shōwa periods, a secular symbol of Japanese culture rather than a religious system.[382] Therefore, the sense of being Japanese emerged alongside the construction of the modern state. After the first phase of modernization

[380] Mita Munesuke: *Social Psychology of Modern Japan*, trans. Stephen Suloway. London: Kegan Paul International, 1992, p. 177.
[381] W. Puck Brecher: *Useless Losers: Marginality and Modernization in Early Meiji Japan.* The European Legacy 17 (6) 2012. pp. 803–806. doi:10.1080/10848770.2012.715811.
[382] Klaus Antoni: *Kokutai - Political Shinto From Early-Modern to Contemporary Japan*. Eberhard Karls University Tübingen. 2016., p. 247.

ended in the late 1880s, the Meiji oligarchy sought to elevate the imperial institution in public consciousness. The Meiji Constitution and the Imperial Rescript on Education became foundational to the family-state ideology, with provincial officials and local elites spreading the myth of an emperor-centered polity. Material symbols – such as holidays, emblems, monuments, and ceremonies – helped instill a memory of imperial continuity, despite its novelty. By portraying newly established or reinterpreted cultural practices – drawn from both material and discursive precedents – as age-old traditions, these elements were removed from historical context and embedded into Japan's imagined enduring past. Daily life became increasingly regulated through various policies, shaping the common people into a disciplined national community and loyal imperial subjects.[383] What is striking about the Meiji nation-building project is that Japanese sovereignty allowed Meiji elites – not colonial administrators – to reimagine and reconstruct the meaning of Japaneseness. Had Japan been colonized, this would not have been possible.[384] National self-reinvention in Japan during the Meiji era also involved reshaping leisure as part of a broader state-driven effort to modernize and "civilize" society according to Western standards. The government promoted new, Westernized forms of recreation that aligned with notions of discipline, morality, and class hierarchy, while traditional entertainments like kabuki and sumo were sanitized or disparaged as backward. Western puritanical attitudes – especially regarding nudity – fueled reforms such as the eventual ban on mixed bathing in 1890. These changes reflected a wider transformation in how leisure was understood: not as idle pleasure, but as something to serve national progress and productivity.[385]

In this section, a major Meiji project in Ginza warrants brief discussion, as it highlights tensions between Meiji modernization ambitions and local interests, as well as broader discontent with the autocratic regime. The Ginza Bricktown project was intended as a showcase of Japan's modernization following the 1872 Ginza fire, with the Meiji government constructing a Western-style district to impress foreign powers and establish Tokyo as a modern capital. However, the project faced strong local opposition. Residents and local officials resisted government intrusion, land expropriation, and the demolition of traditional buildings, often rebuilding temporary homes despite official warnings. Many

[383] Stephen Vlastos (ed.): *Mirror of Modernity – Invented Traditions of Modern Japan.* University of California Press 1998., p. 11.
[384] Stephen Vlastos (ed.): Mirror of Modernity – Invented Traditions of Modern Japan. University of California Press 1998., p. 12.
[385] W. Puck Brecher: Contested Utopias: Civilization and Leisure in the Meiji Era. In: Asian Ethnology Volume 77, Numbers 1&2 • 2018, pp. 35–42.

publicly criticized the project, and most refused to move into the new brick buildings. Ultimately, popular resistance forced the government to withdraw support, and plans to expand Bricktown beyond Ginza were canceled just a year after construction began.[386]

Those who resisted the system and the Meiji political-ideological project faced continuous suppression, including execution, or were eventually assimilated into the structured social order. The Meiji state is known to have executed politically dissenting individuals, taking a harsh stance against opposition, particularly after the Satsuma Rebellion (1877), during which many rebels were executed following their defeat. The Meiji government also passed laws, such as the Public Peace Police Law (治安警察法, 1868) and the Criminal Code (刑法, 1880), which facilitated the repression of political movements. The Freedom and People's Rights Movement (自由民権運動), which called for political rights and a constitutional government, faced heavy suppression, with its leaders being arrested, exiled, or imprisoned. The suppression primarily involved imprisonment and surveillance. Additionally, protests such as the Hibiya Riot (日比谷事件, 1905) were met with force. The harshest crackdown of the Meiji era was the Kōtoku Jiken (幸徳事件) of 1910–1911, in which socialist activists were sentenced to death on the pretext of plotting to assassinate the Meiji Emperor.

The role of German involvement and the influence of ideas originating in Germany during the Meiji period represent another intriguing area of study. There is a widely accepted notion in historiography, based on Kenneth B. Pyle's assertion, that exposure to German economic, political, and legal thought, particularly the 'German Historical School of Economics', pushed Japan in a 'conservative' direction, providing its social scientists and bureaucrats with tools for collectivism, nationalism, and authoritarianism.[387] Yet, this interpretation is criticized by Erik Grimmer-Solem, for oversimplifying and exaggerating the influence of German models on Meiji Japan. Pyle's evaluation often uses mid-19th-century liberal theory as a standard, distorting the context and ignoring the broader international appeal of German academic standards. Furthermore, the construct of 'Meiji conservatism' tied to German social science is based on outdated and questionable assessments of the originally diverse and heterogeneous 'German Historical School' and its influence, making

[386] https://meijiat150dtr.arts.ubc.ca/essays/grunow/ (accessed: 2026 Feb.)
[387] Kenneth B. Pyle: *The Technology of Japanese Nationalism: The Local Improvement Movement, 1900–1918.* In: Journal of Asian Studies 33 (1973). pp. 51–65.; Kenneth B. Pyle: *Advantages of Followership: German Economics and Japanese Bureaucrats* In: The Journal of Japanese Studies 1 (1974). pp. 127–164; Kenneth B. Pyle: *Meiji Conservatism* In: The Cambridge History of Japan, vol. 5, ed. Marius B. Jansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 674–720.

Pyle's generalizations misleading.[388] An apt remark by Erik Grimmer-Solem emphasizes that Meiji Japan should be evaluated on its own merits and within the proper international context, not through double standards rooted in orientalist stereotypes. Comparisons show that German influences were not unique to Meiji Japan, nor did they have a singular political direction. Like many Western models, German ideas in education, law, and social sciences were adapted to Japan's circumstances in diverse and sometimes unexpected ways.[389]

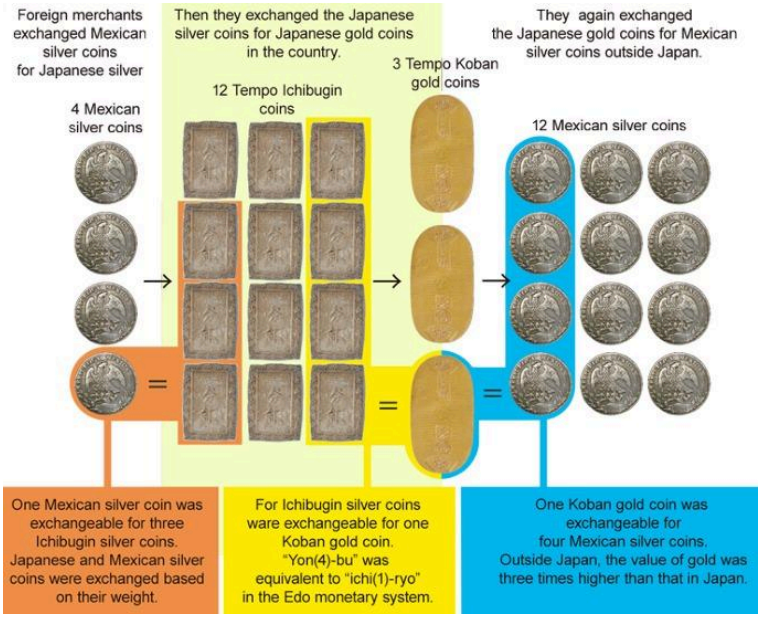
Financial situation of Meiji Japan

The development of banking was another cornerstone of the Meiji modernization project. During the Edo era, Japan lacked a central bank, and its financial market was fragmented. Liquidity flowed through networks of moneychangers, who performed banking functions such as lending, deposits, exchange bills, and issuing paper money. These moneychangers formed guilds in Osaka, Kyoto, and Edo, playing a key role in the financial system. After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, the government sought to modernize Japan's financial system. It first introduced the dajōkan-satsu (太政官札), a national paper currency backed by gold, replacing the silver currency. However, excessive issuance led to inflation. In 1869, kawase-gaisha (為替会社, prototypes of modern commercial banks) were established in major cities, but most failed. In 1870, Hirobumi Itō, after studying the U.S. system, proposed a decentralized multiple-issuing bank model. Meanwhile, Kiyonari Yoshida, having studied in Europe, advocated for a centralized system like the Bank of England. This sparked debate. In 1871, the government introduced the yen, issuing coins and proclaiming the National Bank Act of 1872, which allowed private banks to issue convertible notes.[390] The yen was introduced under a bimetallic system, meaning both gold and silver were legal tender at fixed rates. In practice, silver dominated, especially in everyday use and regional trade. The traditional Japanese currency system included gold, silver, and copper. These precious metals held international value and financial significance. Following the opening of ports in 1854, Japan underwent continuous financial changes through its trade interactions with the outside world. Prior to this, Japan had maintained an autonomous currency system, and in 1715, a decree was issued

[388] Erik Grimmer-Solem: *German Social Science, Meiji Conservatism, and the Peculiarities of Japanese History.* In: Journal of World History, Vol. 16, No. 2. 2005. pp. 192.; 211.
[389] Erik Grimmer-Solem: *German Social Science, Meiji Conservatism, and the Peculiarities of Japanese History.* In: Journal of World History, Vol. 16, No. 2. 2005. p. 222.
[390] Masato Shizume: *A History of the Bank of Japan, 1882-2016*. WINPEC Working Paper Series No.E1719. October 2017. pp. 4-10.

prohibiting the export of precious metals from the country. However, with the signing of unequal trade treaties in 1858, there was a shift, allowing the free export of money from Japan. By the late 1850s, Western traders arriving at the newly opened ports observed a significant exchange rate disparity between international and Japanese copper, silver, and gold. This triggered a “gold rush” in Japan, which is an intriguing story in its own right. Simon Bytheway and Martha Chaiklin provided a clearer picture of this phenomenon in one of their papers on the so-called “Yokohama gold rush”. It was driven by arbitrage – rapid buying and selling of currencies to exploit price differences. Many foreigners in the Japanese open ports took part in it: diplomats, merchants, missionaries, soldiers, sailors, drifters, and other opportunists. But it wasn’t just individuals – most likely, all major foreign trading houses in Japan were also engaged in questionable or illegal trading practices. During the Tokugawa shogunate, foreign trade was heavily restricted, and the commercial banking systems that had developed in the West had no equivalent in Japan. Trade in gold and silver was officially banned from the late 17th century until 1859, though the ban was not always strictly enforced. While local money changers were skilled in handling domestic coinage, few had experience dealing with foreign currencies. The arbitrage opportunity arose from a stark disparity in gold-to-silver ratios: about 1:5 in Japan compared to roughly 1:15 in Western economies. Japanese gold was significantly undervalued relative to silver, creating immense profit potential for foreign traders. They could exchange foreign silver specie for Japanese silver, trade that for gold, export the gold, and then convert it back to silver on international markets – repeating the cycle for considerable gain. A typical transaction went as follows: four Mexican silver dollars (containing 98 grams of pure silver) could be exchanged for twelve Japanese silver ichibu (一分, 103 grams of silver), which in turn could be traded for three gold ryō (両, 19 grams of gold). These three gold ryō could then be sold abroad for twelve Mexican silver dollars (approximately 293 grams of silver). This yielded an approximate return of 200–300% per cycle. (Below is a visual explanation[391] of the trade.)

[391] https://www.bullionstar.com/blogs/jp-koning/the-great-japanese-gold-trade-of-1859/ (based on the source provided by the Museum of the Bank of Japan, accessed: 2026 May)


Foreign merchants exchanged Mexican silver coins for Japanese silver
4 Mexican silver coins
Then they exchanged the Japanese silver coins for Japanese gold coins in the country.
12 Tempo Ichibugin coins
3 Tempo Koban gold coins
They again exchanged the Japanese gold coins for Mexican silver coins outside Japan.
12 Mexican silver coins
One Mexican silver coin was exchangeable for three Ichibugin silver coins. Japanese and Mexican silver coins were exchanged based on their weight.
For Ichibugin silver coins ware exchangeable for one Koban gold coin. "Yon(4)-bu" was equivalent to "ichi(1)-ryo" in the Edo monetary system.
One Koban gold coin was exchangeable for four Mexican silver coins. Outside Japan, the value of gold was three times higher than that in Japan.

The resulting surge in demand for silver to carry out these exchanges even drove up silver prices in European markets. News of Japan's skewed exchange rates quickly spread through global newspapers and journals. The exact quantity of gold, silver, and copper exported from Japan during this period remains unknown, as much of these left Japan as undeclared cargo. This came to an end after a few months, when Japanese officials brought the gold rush to a close: foreigners could still exchange dollars by weight and trade four ichibus for one koban (小判), but a new koban introduced in early 1860 contained only one-third of the gold of the original. Interpretations of this gold rush are varied: for example, Bytheway and Chaiklin challenge the usual narrative, which frames the episode as a conflict between Western merchants and Japanese officials, by instead highlighting China's key role in the process. It was in China that Japanese gold was converted back into silver dollars, which were then brought to Japan to repeat the arbitrage cycle.[392] On top of this, Bytheway and Chaiklin offer an important correction to the standard narrative of the gold rush period, challenging the dominant portrayal of exploitative foreign merchants draining Japan of its gold. They argue that although the bakufu may have suffered losses through gold arbitrage, these were likely offset – or even surpassed – by the inflated silver payments extracted from foreign traders. In this light, the image of greedy foreigners exploiting Japan is incomplete; equally opportunistic Japanese merchants were profiting from foreign silver in return.[393]

[392] Bytheway, Simon James and Martha Chaiklin: *Reconsidering the Yokohama "Gold Rush" of 1859*. In: Journal of World History, vol. 27 no. 2, 2016, pp. 281-293. Project MUSE, https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jwh.2016.0110.
[393] Bytheway, Simon James and Martha Chaiklin: *Reconsidering the Yokohama "Gold Rush" of 1859*. In: Journal of World History, vol. 27 no. 2, 2016, pp. 295-296. Project MUSE, https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jwh.2016.0110.

In the 1870s, Germany, the Scandinavian countries, and the Netherlands adopted the gold standard. Consequently, a significant amount of silver was demonetized in their territories, and it flowed into countries with a dual or silver currency. In these places, the seemingly devalued silver could be exchanged for the more valuable gold. The challenge of exchange rates and the outflow of gold compelled Japan to align itself with international financial trends. However, this adjustment affected both trade and competitiveness. During this period, there was a noticeable increase in internal price levels, with financial speculation displacing the production and trade of goods. General uncertainty hindered trade activities. To counter these challenges, Japan introduced a dual monetary system based on silver and gold to achieve stabilisation. Simultaneously, the international currency system also underwent changes starting from the 1860s. The necessity for currency reform was growing in Europe as well. This was partly due to the newly discovered American silver mines that were producing a substantial amount of silver, thereby posing a threat to the economies of countries relying on a silver-based monetary system. The volatility of silver's value had adverse economic effects on these nations.[394] In the competitive global landscape, there was significant pressure on countries to swiftly transition to a gold-based monetary system. Japan's shift to the gold standard was accomplished by 1897. This transition was crucial not only because it followed a broader international trend, but also because it helped Japan attract gold-based Western capital by enabling financial transactions on a global scale.[395] The gold standard played a crucial role in enabling Japan to import foreign capital for building a modern navy. After the fall of the bakufu, Japan heavily relied on British naval technology, both for acquiring advanced equipment and improving its own production methods. Between 1882 and 1897, Japan's dependence on British armaments was especially pronounced, with British firms like Vickers, Armstrong, and Nobel providing nearly 50% of Japan's naval technology, leaving domestic shipbuilders to act mainly as subcontractors.[396]

A major shift occurred in 1876 when amendments to the National Bank Act made

[394] Molnár Péter: *A korona pénzrendszer bevezetése, megszilárdulása és bukása, különös tekintettel Magyarországra* (1892-1925). Budapest, 2011., pp. 44-56.
[395] Christopher Howe: *The Origins of Japanese Trade Supremacy*, Chigaco, 1996., pp. 138.-148.
[396] Bytheway, Simon James Schiltz, Michael: *The dynamics of wakon yōsai (Japanese spirit, Western technology): the paradoxes and challenges of financial policy in an industrializing Japan, 1854-1939*. In: People, place, and power. – Perth, W.A. : Black Swan Press, 2009. p. 66-67. Japan's gold and currency reserves were held in London, and the finance linked to adopting the gold standard played a subtle yet significant role during the years of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902.

national banknotes inconvertible and allowed banks to issue currency backed by government bonds. This aimed to compensate former samurai, who had lost their stipends,[397] by enabling them to invest in national banks. As a result, 153 national banks were established between 1876 and 1879, some founded by moneychangers, others by merchants or former samurai. That same year, the Mitsui Bank became Japan's first private bank without national bank status. By 1881, Japan had 149 national banks, 90 private banks, and 369 quasi-banks, though data on quasi-banks was incomplete. In 1881, a political struggle over constitutional reform led to Masayoshi Matsukata becoming Finance Minister in 1882. Having studied European banking during his 1878 visit to the Paris International Exposition, he was influenced by Belgium's system and sought to unify Japan's banking structure. That year, he established the Bank of Japan (BOJ) as the country's central bank, consolidating the financial system and ensuring liquidity. Thus, the BOJ adopted the state-interventionist nature of the National Bank of Belgium. During the Meiji period, several special semi-governmental banks were established to complement the Bank of Japan, including the Yokohama Specie Bank (1880). Other banks expanded across Japan's main island of Honshu, to Hokkaido, and into the colonies of Taiwan and Korea. These included the Hypothec Bank of Japan (1897), Agricultural Bank of Japan (1898), Industrial Bank of Japan (1902), Bank of Taiwan (1899), Hokkaido Colonial Bank (1900), and Bank of Chosen (1909).[398] Initially, BOJ banknotes were convertible to silver, leading Japan to adopt the silver standard in the 1880s. By 1899, the transition from a multiple-issuing bank system to a single central bank was complete, with former national banks converted into regular commercial banks.[399]

In terms of commodity and financial management, Japan had already achieved a level of advancement comparable to Western standards during the two hundred years of Tokugawa seclusion. Nevertheless, seeking Western loans became crucial for further development. Japan predominantly sought loans from England, which were utilised for various purposes such as railway construction and compensation for daimyos and samurai. It should be noted that Western loans, especially in the very early Meiji period, instilled a deep distrust of international commerce within the Meiji government, as they

[397] The Meiji government dismantled the socioeconomic and political privileges of the samurai class, including their exclusive rights to bear arms, hold official positions, and receive hereditary stipends.
[398] Bytheway, Simon James Schiltz, Michael: *The dynamics of wakon yōsai (Japanese spirit, Western technology): the paradoxes and challenges of financial policy in an industrializing Japan, 1854-1939*. In: People, place, and power. – Perth, W.A. : Black Swan Press, 2009. p. 62.
[399] Masato Shizume: *A History of the Bank of Japan, 1882-2016*. WINPEC Working Paper Series No.E1719. October 2017. PP. 4-10.

were perceived as an imperialist threat. A good example of this was the ‘Lay Affair’ of 1870, a failed attempt by the Meiji government to secure a foreign loan through Horatio Nelson Lay, a former British consular official in China with experience in international finance. Lay had previously played a key role in organizing China’s foreign-controlled customs service, but his involvement in Japan led to a diplomatic and financial debacle with lasting consequences. The Meiji government, eager to modernize and in need of financial resources, sought to issue a loan on the London market and turned to Lay for assistance. Yet the terms he proposed heavily favored foreign interests, granting them substantial control over Japan’s financial administration. Once the Meiji leadership realized the implications, they rejected the arrangement, fearing financial subordination to Western powers.

By 1903, Japan's foreign debt amounted to 200 million yen. However, following the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, this figure escalated sevenfold to 1.4 billion yen, constituting 40% of the GDP. In preparation for the Russo-Japanese War, Japan sought foreign financial support to cover rising military expenses. In 1904, shortly after the war began, the vice president of the Bank of Japan traveled to the United States and the United Kingdom to secure funding. England played a primary role in financing the majority of Japan's debt during this period.[400] Additional financial support came from the American bank Kuhn, Loeb & Co., which agreed to back Japan in the war. The motivation largely stemmed from the personal opposition of the bank’s president to Tsarist Russia’s anti-Jewish policies, particularly following the pogroms in Kishinev, Białystok, and Odessa.[401] Initially offering a £5 million loan, Kuhn, Loeb & Co. eventually helped raise $200 million for Japan and encouraged other major American banks to contribute as well.[402]

Wenkai He argues that Japan’s fiscal modernization between 1868 and 1895 was primarily driven by a credit crisis caused by the excessive issuance of unsecured paper notes to finance the Meiji Restoration. This financial instability, he contends, forced the government to centralize tax collection to stabilize public finance, laying the foundation for a modern fiscal system. He challenges explanations that emphasize warfare,

[400] Muraközy László: *A japán rejtély – Útteremtő csodák és végzetes zsákutcák* Akadémiai Kiadó, 2016., pp. 98-99.
[401] Between 1903 and 1906, brutal anti-Jewish pogroms in Kishinev, Odessa, and Białystok – often tolerated by Tsarist authorities – led to hundreds of deaths, widespread destruction, and a surge in Jewish emigration and international condemnation of Russia.
[402] Olga Barbasiewicz: *The Cooperation of Jacob Schiff and Takahashi Korekiyo Regarding the Financial Support for the War with Russia (1904–1905) – Analysis of Schiff and Takahashi’s Private Correspondence and Diaries*. In: Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia. No. 27. 2014. pp. 11-12.

industrialization, or elite conflicts, asserting that financial instability was the decisive factor. However, while the credit crisis was undoubtedly a major catalyst, Japan's fiscal modernization was also shaped by broader state-building efforts. The Meiji government's push for military and industrial expansion further reinforced the need for stable public finance, making reform an inevitable part of modernization. Wenkai He's argument effectively highlights the role of financial instability in driving change, but its exclusivity is debatable, as Japan's leadership was already committed to centralization as part of a broader transformation.[403]

The onset of the Meiji period was marked by severe economic challenges: all state investments culminated in bankruptcy (between 1868 and 1885, Meiji state-owned enterprises accumulated cumulative losses that amounted to 12 percent of the Japanese government's total expenditures during the same period),[404] and inflation plagued Japan from 1868 to 1885, compounded by a chronic trade balance deficit until 1895. During this period, Japan lagged behind China and India in terms of industrialization. At the same time, it distinguished itself from them in three key aspects. Firstly, Japan established monopolistic industrial and financial interest groups (zaibatsu, 財閥) that played a pivotal role in shaping the country's political and economic trajectory. Secondly, modernization was strategically employed for territorial expansion. Thirdly, Japan emerged as a significant player on the Asian stage, engaging in colonisation and expanding its territory by 80%. In 1895, following victory in the Sino-Japanese War, Japan obtained a quarter of its gross national product from China.[405] This acquisition allowed Japan to balance its trade by using Chinese gold and transition to a gold-based currency.

When the gold monetary system was implemented in 1897, 1 yen equated to 0.75 grams of gold. Japan financed this transition using the spoils of war obtained from China. Originally, China was obligated to pay 8,500 tons of silver, but Japan compelled China to pay in gold. China lacked the substantial amount of gold required, leading it to secure

[403] Wenkai He: *Paths toward the Modern Fiscal State: England, Japan, and China.* Harvard University Press, 2013.
[404] Juhász, Réka and Sakabe, Shogo and Weinstein, David E.: *Codification, Technology Absorption, and the Globalization of the Industrial Revolution* (July 2024). NBER Working Paper No. w32667, p. 7. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=4894661
[405] It is worth noting that the Triple Intervention of 1895, a diplomatic move by Russia, Germany, and France, forced Japan to relinquish the Liaodong Peninsula, which it had gained from China after winning the First Sino-Japanese War. Russia, fearing Japan's presence near its own ambitions in Manchuria, led the intervention with German and French support, pressuring Japan to return the territory in exchange for a larger financial indemnity. Though Japan complied, the event caused deep resentment, especially when Russia soon occupied the very region it had denied Japan. This betrayal fueled anti-Russian sentiment and contributed to Japan's military buildup, ultimately leading to the Russo-Japanese War in 1904.

loans from France, England, Russia, Germany, and Austro-Hungary at an interest rate of 4-5%.[406] The majority of Japan's foreign borrowing, about 87.1%, was denominated in pounds and issued on the London financial market. This borrowing was facilitated by the London Group for government loans and by the Industrial Bank of Japan and the London Group for municipal and company loans. After the 1909 Franco-Japanese Agreement, the Paris financial market became a significant competitor, with 12.9% of total borrowing denominated in francs by the time of World War I. The close financial relationship between Britain and Japan, strengthened by the 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance, greatly supported Japan's war efforts. The war against Russia required significant foreign capital for armaments, and Japan had exclusive access to British capital through government loans. These loans made up 30.9% of Japan's total government borrowing between 1870 and 1930. The alliance allowed Japan to protect British interests in East Asia and eventually pursue regional hegemony. [407]

Another key financial pillar was the 1873 Land Tax, widely regarded as one of the most significant reforms of the Meiji Restoration. A high-ranking Meiji official, who had translated a book on economics during the Tokugawa period, realized that Japan could generate substantial tax revenue with minimal efficiency loss by implementing a heavy land tax on farmers. This land tax provided the early Meiji government with the funds necessary to finance massive investments across various sectors.[408]

Between 1886 and 1897, Japan's economy grew at an annual rate of 3% under the silver standard, benefiting from the yen's depreciation against gold-standard currencies. A revised treaty with Britain in 1894 increased tariff rates and ended Britain’s consular jurisdiction and unilateral most-favored-nation status, leading to the gradual revision of similar unequal treaties with other Western nations. Japan succeeded in abolishing extraterritoriality, removing export duties, and introducing a system of import tariffs that combined statutory and conventional rates. It also gained the ability to renegotiate tariffs every four years and secured a fixed treaty duration of 12 years with a notice-based termination option. The treaty also granted reciprocal rights of residence, travel, navigation, and commerce, and marked Japan’s recognition as an equal member

[406] Christopher Howe: *The Origins of Japanese Trade Supremacy*. Chicago, 1996. pp. 20-21.
[407] Bytheway, Simon James Schiltz, Michael: *The dynamics of wakon yōsai (Japanese spirit, Western technology): the paradoxes and challenges of financial policy in an industrializing Japan, 1854-1939*. In: People, place, and power. – Perth, W.A. : Black Swan Press, 2009. p. 69.
[408] Juhász, Réka and Sakabe, Shogo and Weinstein, David E.: *Codification, Technology Absorption, and the Globalization of the Industrial Revolution* (July 2024). NBER Working Paper No. w32667, p. 10. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=4894661

of the international community. Nevertheless, Japan did not achieve full tariff autonomy. Although it could revise tariffs, it had to consult and obtain agreement from foreign powers and give advance notice, meaning it could not act independently. Low tariff rates on key imported goods also remained, which favored Western powers and may have slowed Japan's industrialization. Other restrictions, such as perpetual foreign leases, coastal trading rights, and the continued Most Favoured Nation clause, also persisted.[409] By 1911, Japan had achieved full tariff autonomy and was recognized as an emerging empire and a full member of the international community of Western powers. However, maintaining its newfound status required significant resources, creating a trade-off between national wealth accumulation and military expansion. Japan addressed this challenge by adopting the gold standard in 1897, which facilitated international trade and access to global financial markets. This proved advantageous during the Russo-Japanese War, as Japan successfully secured large foreign loans. Yet, post-war economic adjustments led to slower growth. To maintain gold convertibility, Japan implemented contractionary monetary and fiscal policies, reducing its annual growth rate to 2% between 1898 and 1913. Japan was burdened with overseas debt, which constrained fiscal and monetary policy while keeping the current account in deficit. Financing these deficits remained a persistent challenge.[410]

Another calculation reveals that Japan's economic development appears almost absent in terms of per capita income growth. Between 1850 and 1870, the growth rate was a mere 0.5 percent per year, rising slightly to 0.6 percent between 1870 and 1885, and averaging just 1.2 percent per year from 1885 to 1910. These figures focus specifically on the per capita income, which reflects the average income of individuals and may not fully capture the broader economic expansion of the country. While per capita growth remained relatively slow, Japan's overall economic output showed more significant growth during this period, with the country's Gross National Product (GNP) growing at an average rate of 2.4 percent annually from 1886 to 1913.[411]

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[409] Cortazzi-Hoare-Brailey-Hotta: The Revision of Japan' Early Commercial Treaties. The Suntory Centre, Suntory and Toyota International Centres for Economics and Related Disciplines, London School of Economics and Political Science. Discussion Paper No. IS/99/377 November 1999., p. 39.

[410] Masato Shizume: *A History of the Bank of Japan, 1882-2016*. WINPEC Working Paper Series No.E1719. October 2017. pp. 10-11.

[411] The Maddison Project Database, 2020. Bolt, J. and L. van Zanden (2020). *The Maddison Project: Maddison style estimates of the evolution of the world economy*.

Rapid development in Japan

The widely held belief that Japan's modernization resulted solely from its forced opening to the West in the late 19th century is challenged by evidence of earlier indigenous developments. From the 16th century onward, technological advancements, high literacy rates, and a flourishing commercial economy indicate that modernization had already begun within Japan, independent of Western influence. Japan's path to modernity did not begin with its contact with the West; rather, various social and institutional transformations had been shaping the country long before the Meiji period. The Tokugawa state (1603–1868) functioned as a "developmental container", fostering structural conditions that later facilitated rapid modernization. One crucial factor was the bureaucratization of the samurai class – particularly the middle and lower ranks – who increasingly took on administrative roles at both the central and domain levels. This shift ensured a pool of skilled personnel. Hazel J. Jones notes that in 1868, Japan was 98–99 percent deficient in machine technology compared to Western Europe, but *60–80 percent on par with the West in bureaucratic institutions*.[412] The Tokugawa period witnessed the emergence of a new intelligentsia, largely drawn from the samurai class, who played a pivotal role in shaping the ideological and institutional foundations of the new regime. Samurai activism was instrumental in dismantling the old order, selectively incorporating traditions to legitimize the new system, and – despite centuries of pacification – ultimately contributing to the militaristic trajectory of modern Japan. At first glance, the Meiji Restoration of 1868 appears to be a radical break, a moment of sudden and total transformation. However, a closer examination reveals a more complex reality. Many of the key activists who mobilized against the Tokugawa regime had previously been involved in xenophobic, anti-foreign movements (notably the sonnō jōi movement, advocating for reverence of the emperor and expulsion of foreigners). Yet, when the decisive moment arrived, they pivoted toward a policy of aggressively seeking knowledge from the West. Despite this outward embrace of modernization, nativist ideologies soon resurfaced in the stabilization of the Meiji state. Initial fluctuations in national identity gave way to a rigid and exclusionary form of nationalism, which some critics argue sought to make the nation itself the ultimate point of reference in all aspects of political and social life.[413]

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[412] Hazel J. Jones: *The Formulation of the Meiji Government Policy Toward the Employment of Foreigners*. In: Monumenta Nipponica, Vol. 23, No. 1/2 (1968), p. 11.

[413] Jóhann Páll Árnason: *Civilizational Aspects of Japanese History: Continuities and Discontinuities*. In: Historická

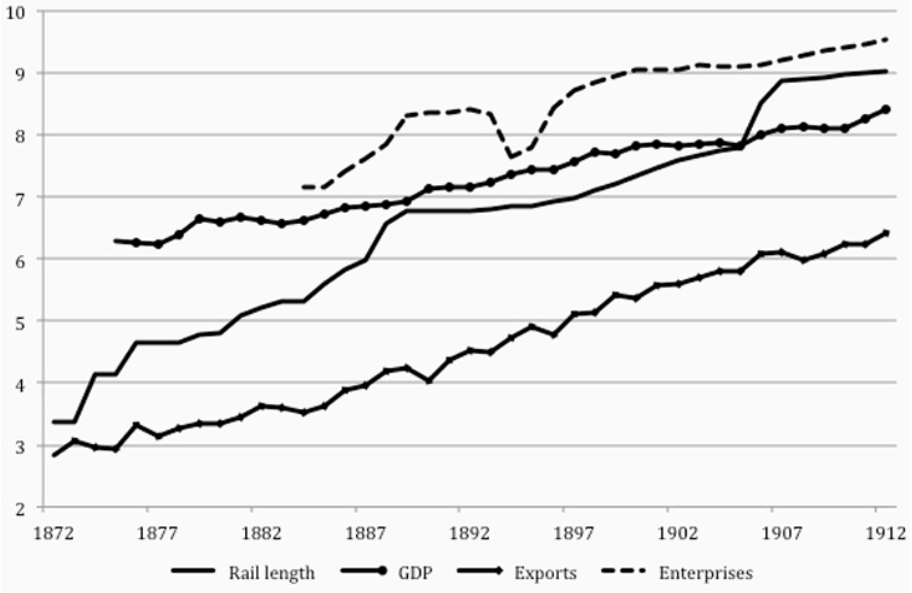
During the Meiji period, Japan's population experienced growth. The 1872 census reveals that the population was 33 million, and by 1914, it had increased to 53 million, with the average age around 43 years between 1892-1899. Although Japan was initially considered industrially insignificant until 1890, transportation infrastructure also began to develop gradually. In 1872, only 29 km of railway tracks existed, but by 1914, Japan had an extensive network covering 11,400 km of railway lines.[414] Railway development in Japan was a crucial component of its highly successful industrial modernization at the end of the 19th century. Japan first saw a full-size steam engine in 1865, when Thomas Glover imported the *Iron Duke* from Shanghai for a trial run in Nagasaki. The country's first passenger railway, built by British engineers, opened in 1872 between Yokohama and Tokyo. Between 1870 and 1874, a significant portion of the government's investments in industrial modernization went into railway construction.[415] Japan's railroads further contributed to industrialization by reducing transport costs, integrating markets, and fostering economic growth. From 1872 to 1907, the network expanded rapidly, coinciding with a tripling of national income. Early railway projects connected major cities and ports, but financial constraints delayed nationwide expansion. In the 1880s, the government allowed private investment, leading to a public-private partnership that lasted until the 1906–07 nationalization of major lines. Rail access boosted industries like silk and coal, while iron and steel benefited only after state intervention. Despite these developments, the actual correlation between railroad expansion and economic growth remains debated, as highlighted in a brilliant research paper by John Tang. The study finds that railroads helped the economy grow by increasing investment in businesses, especially in services, and making manufacturing firms larger. At the same time, fewer new businesses were created in areas with rail access. Bigger cities and landlocked regions benefited the most, as expected from economic geography theories. Still, there are some issues with the data – many small or undocumented businesses might not have been counted. Also, since railways focused more on passenger travel than freight, they didn't fully support industrial production. Coastal shipping was still widely used, meaning railways weren't the only important transport option. While rail expansion likely contributed to economic growth, it's hard to measure the exact impact

Sociologie, Vol 13. No 2. (2021), pp. 107–112.

[414] Mason-Caiger: *Japán története*. Budapest, Püski, 2004., p. 195.

[415] *Encyclopedia of the age of the industrial revolution 1700-1920*, VOL I.; Edited by: Christine Rider; Greenwood Press, USA, 2007., p. 339.

without more detailed data on prices and living standards.[416]



Meiji-era trends of economic indicators (values reported in logs with the following units: rail length in kilometers, GDP and exports in millions of yen, current value; and enterprises in total)[417]

The first modern Japanese factory, a silk knotting facility, commenced operations in 1870, as the Meiji leaders recognized the crucial role that the export of silk would play for Japan.[418] By 1862, raw silk and silkworm cocoons accounted for 86% of Japan's exports, and by 1893 the silk industry had become the country's largest export sector, contributing 42% (102 million English pounds) of total exports. However, by the 1870s, they confronted significant challenges. The demand for silk cocoons from Asia in Europe diminished due to Pasteur's discovery of a solution to the disease causing the death of European silkworms. Conversely, the European market demanded high-quality silk yarn for machine silk yarn processing, and Japan could only compete with quality goods. The Japanese government initiated research, organised study trips to France, Italy, and Austria, and participated in international exhibitions. In Japan's foreign trade between 1868 and 1882, silk goods held a prominent position in the list of export commodities, followed by tea and seafood, constituting a combined 70-80 percent of total exports.

[416] John Tang: *Railroad expansion and entrepreneurship: evidence from Meiji Japan.* 2013. Sept. The Australian National University. Manuscript, pp. 1-6.; 12-13.
[417] John Tang: *Railroad expansion and entrepreneurship: evidence from Meiji Japan.* 2013. Sept. The Australian National University. Manuscript, p. 17. Source: Japan Statistical Association (1987), series 8-4, 10-1, 13-3, and 15-5.
[418] The raw materials for silk, namely the mulberry tree and the silkworm, were introduced to Japan from the Asian mainland in the third century. Through the ongoing evolution of silk yarn production and advancements in silk weaving and dyeing techniques, the silk industry matured into one of the most refined branches of Japanese industrial art. In the 16th century, Japan's fascination with Chinese silk emerged as a crucial factor in the development of foreign trade.

Despite a temporary price collapse caused by overproduction and renewed competition from Europe and China, Japan produced around 15 million pounds of raw silk between 1899 and 1903, becoming the world's largest silk producer. Mechanised cotton mills further expanded output, producing approximately 400 million pounds of cotton yarn annually from 1907 onwards. This industrial growth relied heavily on female and child labour, who endured harsh and inhumane working conditions, including night shifts, confinement in overcrowded dormitories, delayed wages, and exposure to disease. In June 1886, more than 100 women at the Amamiya silk reeling and spinning factory in Yamanashi Prefecture staged Japan's first industrial strike in response to extended working hours and low pay, successfully negotiating improved conditions. The strike inspired further labour action, and by 1898 there were approximately 50 labour disputes across Japan. Despite severe exploitation, factory work offered some women opportunities for economic advancement and social mobility. To retain female workers, factory managers introduced company-organised activities and compulsory six-year elementary education programmes, including ethics and 'instruction on proper Japanese womanhood'. While these measures aimed to produce a disciplined and obedient workforce, they also reinforced prevailing social ideals about women's roles in Japanese society.[419]

The export of handicrafts saw a noticeable increase during this period.[420] From 1868 to 1872, the import side of foreign trade was primarily characterised by the influx of grain, woollen yarn, woollen fabric, textile goods, and sugar. Subsequently, between 1873 and 1882, textile goods and woollen yarn, along with sugar, dominated the list of imported products. Until 1900, the textile industry stood as the principal modern sector in Japan's economic landscape. By around 1909, Japan's modern economic structure had taken shape, with approximately 60% of the labour force no longer engaged in agriculture. The share of the agricultural sector in the overall domestic production declined from 45 percent in 1885 to 32 percent in 1914. Japan's primary driving forces have been industry, commerce, and the service sector, along with ancillary activities associated with these.[421]

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[419] Manuel Schilcher: *Inventing the Kimono - Ways the West created a Japanese tradition*. Atelier Furusato, p. 6. http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16507.94248

[420] Christopher Howe: *The Origins of Japanese Trade Supremacy*. Chicago, 1996. pp. 93-97.

[421] Conrad Totman: *Japán története*, Bp., Osiris Kiadó, 2006., p. 452.

Period	Imports (Million Yen)	Exports (Million Yen)	National Income (Million Yen)	Imports Compared to National Income (%)
1868-72	23	16	-	-
1873-77	27	22	-	-
1878-82	33	30	667	4,9
1883-87	33	42	606	5,4
1888-93	73	77	830	8,8
1894-98	223	139	1436	15,7
1899-1903	270	244	2016	13,4
1904-08	442	377	2695	16,4
1909-13	544	496	3589	15,1

The trends of Japan's exports and imports (current prices as of 1966)[422]

Comparing some results of the Meiji project on a global scale highlights the pace of Japan's modernization. By 1870, it had established telegraph service between Tokyo and Yokohama, about 25–30 years after similar developments in the U.S. and Europe. A modern postal system followed in 1871, inspired by Britain's model. Japan's first railway opened in 1872, three years after the completion of America's transcontinental railroad. Japan adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1873, ahead of Russia and the Ottoman Empire, but long after Catholic Europe. (With the adoption of the Gregorian calendar came the seven-day workweek, though Sundays were not recognized as public holidays for state employees until three years later. From 1872, foreigners in Japan received Sundays and Wednesday afternoons off, and by 1873, summer vacations were introduced for foreign professionals, reflecting Western influence on Japan's work and leisure routines.) Tokyo's first electric utility, the Tokyo Electric Light Company, began operations in 1887, just five years after New York's Edison Electric Company. Electric streetcars were introduced in 1895 and hydroelectric power in 1897, less than a decade after their debut in the U.S.

[422] Tobata Seichi (ed.): *The Modernization of Japan*. The Institute of Asian Economic Affairs, Tokyo. 1966., p. 175.

Newspapers and the press in Meiji Japan

The role of the press became increasingly significant after Japan 'opened up': the first newspaper was published in Tokyo in 1872, and by 1891, there were already 716 newspapers and magazines in circulation. While there were attempts to establish newspapers during the Tokugawa period, they were prohibited by the authorities. Beginning in 1860, the bakufu started publishing news selected from Western missionary newspapers, translated into Japanese. Additionally, foreigners residing in concession areas began publishing their own newspapers from 1861. Following Confucian principles, the Meiji politicians emphasised the use of this new medium in service of the state's needs. When the Meiji regime came to power, it established the right to publish newspapers in 1871. The decree stipulated that the purpose of newspapers was to civilise the people, thus newspapers were not allowed to "agitate, bore, or mislead" the public. With the advent of this new medium, the need arose to encourage people to utilize it. Consequently, reading rooms and reading circles were established throughout Japan from 1872 onwards to promote newspaper reading. Meanwhile, Japan kept pace with educational developments, implementing compulsory education in 1872, building upon the strength of local schools from the Tokugawa period. For instance, as early as 1868, approximately 80% of the male population could read and write. The average daily newspaper and magazine circulation increased during the 1880s from about 160,000 to 400,000, reaching one copy per 100 people by 1889. From 1894–1895 to 1907, the number of newspapers and journals nearly tripled from 745 to 2,290, in addition to 3,721 other publications that were founded and ceased within the same period. [423]

The proliferation of post offices also played a role, with 3,570 post offices across Japan in 1878.[424] Japan's first official telegraph line, completed in 1869 by George Culphard (a British engineer), ran alongside the Yokohama–Tokyo railway, though Thomas Glover (a Scottish merchant living in Japan) had likely built one earlier in Nagasaki. By 1871, British engineers helped expand the network from Tokyo to Nagasaki and Aomori. (Early on, guards were needed to protect the lines from angry farmers whose land they crossed.)

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[423] 松田宏一郎「「近時政論考」― 陸羯南における《政論》の方法」In: 東京都立大学法学会雑誌 Vol. 33, No. 1 (1992), pp. 111–171; James L. Huffman: *Commercialization and the changing world of the mid-Meiji press*, In: Helen Hardacre (ed.): New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan. Leiden: Brill, 1997, pp. 562–580.

[424] Földrajzi Közlemények, 1880., 1910.

Newspapers, (along with government-approved textbooks used in the Meiji Japan elementary school system) played a significant role in the standardization of language. At the end of the 19th century, the concept of "standard language" (hyōjungo 標準語) emerged as a means of establishing a common language for Japan, intended to connect and transcend regional dialects. However, the standard was not a mix of all dialects but the language spoken by the educated elite in the Yamanote area of Tokyo. This language, later promoted as the "national language" (kokugo 国語), was ideologically reinterpreted to represent "the Japanese language" as a whole.[425] This shift was not purely linguistic but ideological, though it was framed as a linguistic issue, with linguists playing a central role in the process. After the Meiji Restoration, Japan's linguistic diversity became evident with various complex writing styles, such as kanbun (漢文), yomikudashi (読み下し), sōrōbun (候文), and wabun (和文), used by educated elites. Kanbun, a classical Chinese system, was read with the kundoku (訓読) method, but this was not colloquial Japanese. Through education, the sodoku (素読) style, which involved reciting texts without full comprehension, became widespread. Eventually, the kundoku style evolved into the formal written language of the Meiji period, used in laws, education, and media. Nevertheless, this still differed from spoken language, leading to the genbun'itchi (言文一致) movement, which sought to align written language with the spoken Tokyo dialect, paving the way for the creation of the standard Japanese language.[426] What is particularly interesting about the Meiji language reforms is that the reformers themselves did not yet possess a clear concept of a Japanese nation or a national language, as pointed out by Atsuko Ueda. Rather than assuming the existence of a unified "Japanese" language, linguistic reforms helped create the conditions that later made national identity possible. Some intellectuals viewed the spoken language as "Japanese" and the written language as "Chinese". As a result, many texts from this period describe the written language as "foreign" and therefore not "natural" to the Japanese people. Understandably, this perception fueled anti-Chinese sentiment, which, combined with the slogan "Westernization and de-Asianization" (脱亜入欧), further reinforced such attitudes. While Meiji intellectuals sought to modernize Japan by improving literacy and facilitating the transfer of Western knowledge, debates centered on

[425] For further reading on the subject, see: Luka Culiberg: *Towards Theoretical Approach to the Understanding of Language Ideologies in Post-Meiji Japan.* In: Acta Linguistica Asiatica, 1(1); pp. 23-38. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4312/ala.1.1.23-38

[426] Luka Culiberg: *Japanese Language, Standard Language, National Language: Rethinking Language and Nation.* In: Asian Studies I (XVII), 2 (2013), p. 25., 30.

script choice (kana, the Roman alphabet, or even English), grammar standardization, and writing systems. A common theme in these debates was criticism of kanji. Initially, criticism was driven by practical concerns, as kanji was perceived as an obstacle to mass education. Later, opposition to kanji became increasingly ideological as anti-Chinese sentiment intensified. With the emergence of the central language reform movement, the 'unification of spoken and written language', many intellectuals came to believe that Western languages derived their strength from the unity of speech and writing. Consequently, they viewed spoken Japanese as *authentic*, while written language – especially kanbun – was regarded as *foreign* and *unnatural*. This belief encouraged proposals to replace kanji with phonetic scripts such as kana or the Roman alphabet. By the late 1880s, nevertheless, a new generation of reformers argued that kanji was already an integral part of Japanese culture and focused instead on standardizing grammar and literary language. This shift culminated in the work of Kazutoshi Ueda and his concept of kokugo (national language), which emerged alongside Japan's growing regional power following the First Sino-Japanese War. Kokugo was fundamentally an idealized and incomplete construct. Like the standard language based on the Tokyo dialect, it existed more as an aspiration than a reality and was defined through comparison with local dialects. Ultimately, language reform became intertwined with nation-building, racial thought, and Japan's attempt to position itself as a modern imperial power distinct from both China and the Western powers that often viewed Japan as racially inferior.[427]

Public health in Meiji Japan

From the late 17th century to the early 19th century, Japan's administration began to incorporate technological advancements to improve public health and sanitation, establishing well-regulated systems that laid the groundwork for a modern public health framework. Public health became a central objective of modernization efforts during the Meiji period, with scientists, physicians, bureaucrats, and social reformers working to address the health challenges of a rapidly changing society. The Meiji era witnessed significant public health crises, exacerbated by rapid urbanization and industrialization.

[427] Atsuko Ueda: *Language, Nation, Race - Linguistic Reform in Meiji Japan 1868-1912*. University of California Press, 2021. pp. 5-6.; 15-17.; 46.; 100-101.

Cholera, in particular, posed a persistent threat, with deadly outbreaks occurring in 1869, 1877, 1882, 1890, and 1902. Findings of S. Ryan Johansson and Carl Mosk indicate that cholera was difficult to control in Japan due to its extensive coastline and the vulnerability of its poorly nourished population. The disease, which was first introduced in 1822, became more frequent and severe with increased commerce. In 1858, cholera caused several hundred thousand deaths. The government began fighting cholera in 1874 by establishing the Central Sanitary Bureau, implementing quarantine measures based on European models. These included inspecting incoming ships, isolating infected individuals, and cleaning houses where outbreaks occurred. Enforcement of these measures required local cooperation, and the government launched educational campaigns to raise awareness. By the early 20th century, Japan reduced cholera cases significantly, although outbreaks from China and the Philippines still occurred.[428] Smallpox was another major concern, especially in the early years of the Meiji period. In response, the government introduced mandatory vaccination in the 1870s, which played a significant role in reducing the disease's incidence. By 1908, smallpox had become a minor cause of death in Japan, responsible for fewer than 100 deaths annually. This was due to the vaccination of at least 87% of children, with 91% compliance in urbanized areas. When initial vaccinations proved ineffective, second and third doses were administered and recorded by local authorities.[429] Nutritional deficiencies, such as beriberi,[430] also became widespread, particularly among urban populations and soldiers. By the 1880s, the Japanese Navy adopted dietary changes that helped alleviate the issue, and growing public awareness of the link between nutrition and health further contributed to the reduction of beriberi cases. Tuberculosis, a bacterial infection that flourished in crowded urban centers, was another critical concern throughout the period, disproportionately affecting factory workers and the urban poor. To combat these health threats, public health campaigns emphasized hygiene and sanitation, while Western medical treatments were gradually adopted. (At the same time, Meiji leaders sought to

[428] S. Ryan Johansson and Carl Mosk: *Exposure, Resistance and Life Expectancy: Disease and Death during the Economic Development of Japan, 1900-1960.* In: Population Studies, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Jul., 1987), pp. 220-221.
[429] S. Ryan Johansson and Carl Mosk: *Exposure, Resistance and Life Expectancy: Disease and Death during the Economic Development of Japan, 1900-1960.* In: Population Studies, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Jul., 1987), p. 220.
[430] a disease caused primarily by a deficiency of vitamin B1 (thiamine). It affects the nervous system, heart, and muscles and was historically a major public health problem in East and Southeast Asia, especially where diets relied heavily on polished white rice. The name comes from the Sinhalese phrase beri beri (බෙරි බෙරි), meaning roughly "weakness" or "I cannot, I cannot", referring to the severe weakness experienced by sufferers. Beriberi was a major issue in Meiji and Taishō-era Japan, particularly among soldiers and sailors, whose diets often consisted largely of polished white rice. It became known as kakke (脚気) in Japanese.

frame hygiene as part of Japan's historical traditions by falsely presenting it as long-standing – retroactively linking it to broad, recognizable concepts and frequently drawing on Edo-era precedents to shape public health policies.[431]) Traveling hygiene exhibitions (衛生博覧会, eisei hakurankai) were held to inform the public about health, sanitation, and modern medical advancements. Public health agents encouraged all Japanese to adopt proper walking posture, use chairs whenever possible, and minimize prolonged kneeling, as it was believed to contribute to bowed legs and pigeon-toed gait.

By the mid-19th century, Japan's urban sanitation was arguably more advanced than that of the West. Particularly noteworthy was Japan's efficient waste disposal system and the high quality and quantity of its water supply. The practice of collecting and using human waste – urine, feces, and night soil – as fertilizer was widespread in Japan.[432] This practice helped prevent water contamination and reduced the risk of disease transmission, especially in urban areas. Another example is regular bathing, which became common in Japan by the late 18th century, and was not part of Western hygiene culture until the 19th century. As a result of these early sanitation practices, life expectancy in Tokugawa Japan was comparable to that of 19th-century Europe, a remarkable achievement for its time. Night soil as a commodity during the Meiji era plays a central role in the fascinating story of Tatsugorō Ōsaki, a Tokyo carpenter, gambler, and illiterate self-made man who eventually became the landlord of hundreds of slum tenements in the city's fastest-growing working-class district. Beginning in the mid-1880s, he built wooden tenements on the outskirts of Tokyo. His business model included shared profits among investors from the sale of night soil collected from the latrines of rickshaw pullers and other day laborers, who were seen not only as tenants (sources of rent) but also as producers within the commodity cycle. The collected night soil was then

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[431] Kerry Shannon: *Reinventing "Hygiene": The Sanitary Society of Japan and Public Health Reform During the Mid-Meiji Period*. In: East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal, 17:3, 2023. pp. 296-297. DOI: 10.1080/18752160.2023.2197786

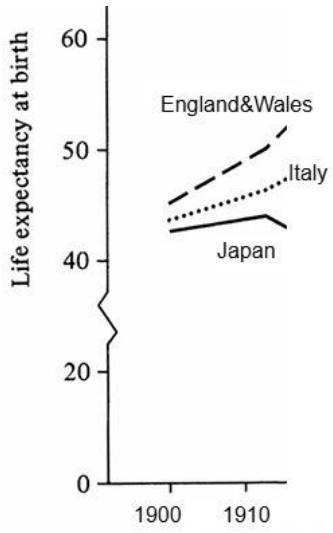
[432] In 19th-century Western societies, discussing human waste was considered improper, reflecting a broader association in Christianity between excreta, sin, and the Devil. In contrast, Japan did not develop a similar condemnation. In both Shintoism and Buddhism, excreta were not viewed as inherently defiling; in fact, Japanese mythology includes deities born from excrement. The toilet deity Kawaya no Kami (厠神) was believed to protect households from misfortune and illness. Toilets were considered spiritually significant, and maintaining cleanliness was thought to bring good fortune. Pregnant women, for example, were encouraged to clean privies to ensure beautiful and healthy children. Some households even performed rituals to honor the deity and avoid bad luck. Buddhism emphasized cleanliness, reinforcing the importance of hygiene, including after defecation. While excrement was acknowledged as physically unclean, it was not seen as spiritually polluting. Even before the scientific understanding of disease transmission, people generally avoided excrement, but Japan adopted a "handle with care" approach. Marta Elzbieta Szczygiel: *Sociology of Waste in Christian Europe and Japan: Comparative Analysis of the Notion of Human Waste*. 2017 Journal of International and Advanced Japanese Studies Vol.9, March 2017, pp. 241-246.

purchased by nearby farmers as fertilizer. It appears that a year's worth of the contents of a single household's latrine amounted to the equivalent of between one and two months' rent.[433] Meiji-era urbanization led to a ten-fold increase in night soil collection, to the extent that even some settlement hotels earned part of their annual profits by selling their guests' waste.[434]

After the Meiji Restoration in 1868, Japan rapidly integrated Western medical practices and discoveries, further enhancing its public health system. This modernization was complemented by legal measures, such as the government's approach to cremation, which reflected both religious and practical considerations. Initially, in 1873, the government banned cremation in an attempt to promote Shintoism and diminish Buddhism's influence. However, this law was quickly repealed due to practical concerns in crowded urban areas like Tokyo and Osaka, where there was insufficient burial space. The government then promoted cremation as a more practical and economical method of body disposal. Western incineration techniques were introduced, refined, and made more affordable in Japan, contributing to the widespread adoption of cremation. Laws mandating the cremation of those who died from infectious diseases further helped improve public health. By 1896, the cremation rate in Japan reached 26.5 percent, with the practice spreading even to rural areas where burial had previously been the norm.

The measures discussed above contributed to changes in life expectancy as well. Japanese government data shows that life expectancy at birth for Japanese males was 42.8 between 1891-1898 (alternative estimate: 37), 44 between 1899-1903 (alternative estimate: 39), and 44.3 between 1908-1913 (alternative estimate: 41). [435](In 1898, life expectancy in Japan was 44.3 years for women.)[436] To place these figures in a global perspective, the table below provides a comparative overview:

[433] Jordan Sand: *Land, Lumber, Labor, and Excrement: A Slumlord's View of Tokyo at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*. In: Journal of Urban History, 48(5), 2022. pp. 1017-1030. https://doi.org/10.1177/00961442221078916
[434] Abend, H. E.: *Treaty Ports*. New York, 1944., p. 185.
[435] A Brief Report on Public Health Administration in Japan, 1963. (Ministry of Health and Welfare, Japanese Government, 1963), p. 14.; Carl Mosk and S. Ryan Johansson: *Death and development in Japan, 1908-1960*, report to the National Science foundation, 1984.
[436] Jayant S. Joshi, Rajesh Tewari: *Public health and sanitation in nineteenth century Japan.* In: Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Vol 64. 2003. pp. 1260-1267.



Life expectancy at birth (males), 1900-1913, Japan, Italy, England&Wales[437].

According to a research paper written by S. Ryan Johansson and Carl Mosk, comparing life expectancy in England and Wales, Italy, and Japan, life expectancy at birth for men in all three countries was similar at the turn of the century, despite significant social and economic differences. England&Wales was the wealthiest country after the US, with much higher income per capita than Japan and Italy. Men's heights reflected these income disparities – Italian men were the shortest in Europe, with Japanese men even shorter. Japan's low adult height aligned with its caloric intake of around 2,000 calories per day, which was below the standard in even poor agricultural countries. England/Wales had a highly urbanized and industrialized society, while Japan and Italy were still in the early stages of development, with predominantly rural economies and low urban populations. Japan had already implemented universal grade school education, whereas Italy lagged behind, with widespread illiteracy. Both Japan and Italy had national public health systems, though Japan's was more efficient due to its better-educated population. In contrast, England/Wales allocated little funding to public health, with responsibility falling to local districts. Japan's public health advancements were remarkable, particularly in military medicine. During the Sino-Japanese War in the 1890s, Japan faced high mortality from infectious diseases, but the government adopted advanced practices from Germany, Austria, and France to combat this. By 1905, Japan had equipped military bases with modern health facilities, reducing deaths from infectious

[437] S. Ryan Johansson and Carl Mosk: *Exposure, Resistance and Life Expectancy: Disease and Death during the Economic Development of Japan, 1900-1960.* In: Population Studies, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Jul., 1987), p. 209. (reedited version by the author). (Sources: S. Preston, N. Keyfitz and R. Schoen, Causes of Death: Life Tables for National Populations (New York, Seminar Press, 1972), and The United National Demographic Yearbook (1967, 1980). For Japan: The 14th Life Tables, Statistics and Information Department, Ministry of Health and Welfare (1976), p. 6.)

diseases and improving soldier health. However, Japan's rapid industrialization and urbanization created new challenges. As people migrated to cities for industrial jobs, they faced more hazardous conditions and higher mortality risks, undermining the benefits of rural life. The government's focus on military buildup during this period also limited resources for addressing health issues caused by industrialization. Despite ongoing public health efforts and educational campaigns, Japan struggled to reduce mortality from endemic infectious diseases. By 1910, the strategies that had worked for controlling epidemics were insufficient for the new health challenges of urbanization and industrialization. Research into vaccines offered hope, but exposure-driven methods of disease control had reached their limits, and Japan's public health system struggled to keep up with the consequences of rapid change.[438] During the Meiji period, Japan's health care system was marked by the introduction of European-style hospitals, especially the German model emphasizing laboratories, clinics, and medical schools. Until the early 1880s, the focus was on rapidly building basic infrastructure, including military and prefectural hospitals, which sharply reduced the number of inhabitants per hospital. After 1881, a policy of privatization shifted growth toward private hospitals, and expansion barely kept pace with population growth, leaving a higher average number of inhabitants per hospital. By the mid-1880s, Japan began privatizing its health care system, following a broader policy of economic privatization.[439]

Colonialism

Japan initiated a robust military development following the change during the Meiji era. Leaders believed that ensuring the country's ascent required the establishment of a strong army, allowing Japan to attain a status comparable to that of Western great powers – the first among non-Western states to do so. After the Compromise, the Monarchy also aimed to keep pace with military technological advancements to maintain its position as a great power, albeit lagging behind the Western powers in this regard. For Japan, military developments translated into territorial acquisition in Asia, driven by a sense of Asian mission fueled by Japanese nationalism. During the mid-19th century,

[438] S. Ryan Johansson and Carl Mosk: *Exposure, Resistance and Life Expectancy: Disease and Death during the Economic Development of Japan, 1900-1960*. In: Population Studies, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Jul., 1987), pp. 216-219; 221-228.
[439] Pierre-Yves Donze: *Studies Abroad by Japanese Doctors: A Prosopographic Analysis of the Nameless Practitioners, 1862–1912*. In: Social History of Medicine Vol. 23, No. 2. pp. 245-246.

global powers sought to expand their colonies in Africa and Asia. The period from 1875 to 1914 is referred to as the age of colonial empires, marked by a shift in power towards the annexation and administration of territories, particularly after 1880. It is worth noting that, with the exception of British India and the Dutch East Indies, the retrospective financial balance of pre-World War I colonialism was not clearly positive for the mother countries.[440] However, the large-scale colonisation persisted without interruption. Approximately a quarter of the Earth's surface, comprising regions beyond the European and American continents, underwent more or less complete division or re-division among a dozen countries. These included, prominently, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, the United States, and Japan. This intensified the global division. As the great empires expanded, a unified global economy emerged, gradually reaching even the most remote corners of the world. This development resulted in the creation of an increasingly interconnected economic, communication, and commodity exchange network. Developed countries became interconnected through monetary and human relations, linking them to both each other and the less developed regions of the world.[441] Colonial expansion was propelled by the dual factors of the need for new markets and the realisation that continental expansion within Europe was limited due to the risk of military conflicts with other major powers. As a result, the great powers redirected their focus and energy towards colonisation outside of Europe, aiming to acquire overseas territories. East Asia, with its untapped potential, particularly captivated the interest of many European and American traders.[442]

Historians remain divided on whether Austria-Hungary had the capability and intention to acquire colonies at all. (For example, the Hungarian historian András Gerő contends that the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy did have the opportunity and ability; only the intention was missing. The main issue with such approaches is that the Dual Monarchy did in fact pursue colonial ambitions through institutional initiatives such as Department III, established within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Austro-Hungarian Colonial Society in the 1890s. At the same time, Hungarian support for these initiatives remained limited due to pragmatic concerns about economic capacity and expected benefits.) Nevertheless, a state without colonies was not merely a loss of

[440] Búr Gábor: *A Habsburg-birodalom gyarmatpolitikája* In.: Afrikatörténeti tanulmányok, 2011, Mundus Novus Kft., p. 86.
[441] Hobsbawm, Eric: *A birodalmak kora*, Bp., Pannonica Kiadó, 2004., p. 67.
[442] Herczegh Géza: *Európa közepén és Európa peremén – Magyarország nemzetközi kapcsolatainak története 896-1945*, Mikes International, Hága, 2003., p. 150.

prestige; it also highlighted the limitations of capabilities of the given great power.[443] We know that Austria did make early attempts to acquire colonies, such as the establishment of the Austrian East India Company in 1722 (maintained by private merchants), which officially ceased to exist in 1731. Under this company's commission, Dutch captain Wilhelm Bolts established Austria's first colony, a short-lived trading depot, on the East African Nicobar Islands in the late 1770s. Further Austrian attempts date back to the 19th century. Efforts to reacquire Socotra Island in the Indian Ocean emerged in 1857-58, followed by the Solomon Islands in 1895, but due to financial constraints or competition from colonists, these plans did not materialise. Notable instances include the "Mexican adventure", an attempt to establish an empire by Archduke Maximilian Joseph of Austria-Este between 1864-67, and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's expedition to a no-man's land in the Arctic. This expedition resulted in the "colonisation" and naming of an island group called Franz Josef Land.[444] Further along the path of colonization that the Dual Monarchy sought to pursue, we can mention North Borneo, which was considered as a potential target for colonization, where Consul Gustav Overbeck had proclaimed himself maharaja in 1877. Another area of interest was Rio de Oro, a coastal strip in Western Sahara, which Spain had at one point intended to sell; although there were initial plans for the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to purchase it, the idea was eventually abandoned.[445] The first continental expansion – the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina – took place much later, in 1908.[446] In the final decades of the nineteenth century, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy began to engage more actively with the global currents of imperial ambition and colonial expansion. Although lacking overseas colonies of its own, the Monarchy nevertheless sought to position itself among the ranks of Europe's colonial

[443] Búr Gábor: *A Habsburg-birodalom gyarmatpolitikája* In.: Afrikatörténeti tanulmányok, 2011, Mundus Novus Kft., p. 86.
[444] The document asserting possession of the islands was placed under a rock. The official name of the expedition was *Austro-Hungarian North Pole Expedition*. In 1926, the Franz Joseph Land officially became Russian sovereign territory.
[445] Hopka Zoltán: *Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia gyarmatosító törekvései.* In: Világtörténet, 2025/1., pp. 23-40.
[446] The anti-Turkish uprising that erupted in 1875 had a profound impact on the entire Balkan peninsula. Russia, acting as a protector of the Balkan peoples, played a pivotal role in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78, which culminated in the victory of the tsarist armies. Following the war, the peace treaty signed with the Ottoman Empire in San Stefano posed a threat to the European balance. The terms of the San Stefano Peace Treaty were subsequently revised at the Congress of Berlin. Turkey retained part of its European territories, Bulgaria was established with narrower borders, and the European powers authorised the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to administer Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1878, Bosnia-Herzegovina came under military occupation by the Monarchy, and the complete annexation of the occupied territory was officially announced in October 1908. While the annexation eventually gained international approval, the interim period witnessed escalating tensions between Russia and the Monarchy, with Serbia also aligning itself in support of Russia. (It should be mentioned that the Compromise failed to legally integrate the empire's peoples, as differing constitutional concepts prevented a common citizenship. As a result, Bosnia and Herzegovina's status remained unresolved; while granted provincial domicile, they were still considered foreigners within the Monarchy.)

powers. This aspiration was reflected not only in political rhetoric and economic planning but also in the structure and functions of its bureaucratic institutions. One of the key administrative bodies involved in these efforts was the Ballhausplatz III department (Referat III), which was tasked with overseeing colonial affairs. The term colonial affairs (Kolonialpolitische Angelegenheiten or Kolonialpolitik) during this period referred primarily to the so-called "Africa question" and the "Congo question". A significant reorganization of the department took place in 1894, marking a turning point in Austria-Hungary's colonial aspirations. It was at this time that the Ballhausplatz initiated a formal effort to align the Dual Monarchy with the European colonial powers. The joint foreign minister, Agenor Gołuchowski (1895–1906), played a leading role in this endeavor, envisioning the establishment of Austro-Hungarian colonies primarily in Africa or East Asia. He was supported by the joint finance minister, Benjamin Kállay – a Hungarian – whose role was to rally parliamentary and governmental support from the Hungarian side, though this ultimately proved unsuccessful. In addition to governmental action, Gołuchowski recognized the importance of cultivating public support for colonial ambitions. To this end, the Österreichisch-Ungarische Kolonialgesellschaft (Austrian-Hungarian Colonial Society) was founded in 1894, modeled on the earlier Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft (German Colonial Society), established in 1882. The Society aimed to exert pressure on the governments of the Dual Monarchy through lobbying and publication efforts, while also attempting to persuade the upper and middle classes that Austria-Hungary should claim its share of the global economic order. Gołuchowski placed the Society under his direct political patronage, signaling the seriousness of the state's involvement. Between 1895 and 1902, Department III served as the official liaison between the Foreign Minister and the Society, reinforcing the institutional connection between state policy and civil advocacy for colonial expansion.

As observed by Walter Sauer, Austro-Hungarian explorers in overseas territories – whether engaged in commerce, science, or tourism – were deeply enmeshed in colonial geopolitics. Their activities often influenced strategic decision-making, as seen in East Africa, where expeditions aligned with British interests were allowed to proceed, while those perceived as competitors were obstructed. These so-called exploratory missions were, in reality, large-scale colonial enterprises, leaving significant economic and environmental impacts. They relied on forced labor and frequently resorted to violence against local populations to secure resources, enforce passage, or assert dominance.

Notorious incidents include killings during expeditions in Kenya (1888) and Rwanda-Burundi (1892). It is evident that the usual portrayal of Austro-Hungarian actors overseas as merely 'research-oriented' and 'non-colonial' – as presented in the literature of Austria and Hungary – is misleading. In reality, they shared the same colonial biases as their counterparts from other nations, albeit with less government support. Their research often played a role in broader colonial activities. Professionals produced detailed maps, documented mineral deposits, collected anthropological or ethnographical material – sometimes unethically – and studied local languages. Non-professional travelers also contributed by expanding academic knowledge through their reports and collections. Colonial ventures, including conquest, required essential information on routes, transportation, weather, resources, and the economic and political viability of potential protectorates. As such, academic research often functioned as a tool to support colonial interests. Sauer presents an interesting argument: interest in what has been called the 'imperialism of trade' grew significantly after the Compromise. Commercial agreements were made with countries in East Asia, and by the 1880s, British India had become Austria-Hungary's largest overseas trading partner. In light of this, and in the context of the 1873 economic crisis, it becomes clear why the Vienna World Fair of 1873 placed such a strong emphasis on the 'Orient' (including Egypt).[447]

Efforts to acquire territory in Asia began with a secret mission in 1899, the details of which were presented by Georg Lehner in his works.[448] It was then that the warship Kaiserin Elisabeth set off for China on a slightly different mission than usual. The ship's commander, the liner captain Julius Beck von Wellstädt, was assigned a secret task: to establish the basis for the long-term (100-year) concessional possession of a contracted Chinese port by the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. For this purpose, his task was to scout out points along the Chinese coast that, from the perspectives of climate and geography, seemed most suitable for the Monarchy to establish a commercial depot for the promotion of exports (two bays in the Zhejiang province: Sanmen 三門 and Leqing 樂清, and four bays in the Fujian province: Nanguan 南關, Sansha 三沙, Xinghua 興化, and Quanzhou 泉州). The Austro-Hungarian minister to China, Czikann, actively supported the

[447] Walter Sauer: *Habsburg Colonial: Austria-Hungary's Role in European Overseas Expansion Reconsidered*. In: Austrian Studies, Vol. 20, Colonial Austria: Austria and the Overseas (2012), pp. 9-11; 16.
[448] Lehner, Georg: *Die Chinapolitik Österreich-Ungarns 1986–1917. Eine Studie zur Stellung der Habsburgmonarchie im Fernen Osten*. Unpublished Master's thesis, Vienna University 1992. pp. 48-66.; Lehner, Georg: *Österreich-Ungarn in China? Das Gerücht einer territorialen Erwerbung und die österreichische Presse im Frühjahr 1899*. In: Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 110 (2002), pp. 125–149.

Monarchy's territorial acquisition in China. However, Arthur Rosthorn, the first secretary of the Beijing legation, presented a memorandum on the matter that diverged from the official stance. In a cleverly argued document, he highlighted factors that made such grandiose plans unnecessary. Rosthorn pointed out that the Monarchy already had access to ten contractual ports where trade could occur on more favourable terms compared to a location requiring new infrastructure development and the installation of merchants. Perhaps influenced by this memorandum and the Italians' unsuccessful attempts to colonize China, Agenor Goluchowsky, the foreign minister of the Monarchy at the time, eventually abandoned the plan to establish a contract port. Another explanation maintains that the plans were abandoned due to shifts in the Chinese Empire's international relations. The Chinese government, under pressure from Japan, was compelled to declare that no part of Fujian Province would be ceded to a third power. (Japan strongly opposed similar Italian claims to Sanmen Bay in March 1899.)[449]

However, the acquisition of concession territory in Asia was eventually realized, largely by chance and not in the manner originally planned. The forces of the Dual Monarchy participated in a joint military action during the Chinese Boxer Rebellion in 1900, a period marked by the Chinese masses' hostility towards foreigners.[450] As Chinese attacks increasingly targeted foreign embassies and legations, culminating in the assassination of the German ambassador, Klemens von Ketteler, the European powers deemed international intervention necessary. The United States and European powers (British, French, Italian, German, and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy), along with Japan and Russia, dispatched troops to China. Initially, only the ship Zenta was present in Chinese waters, but upon news of the crisis, additional warships – Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia, Aspern, and Kaiserin Elisabeth – were deployed. The combined forces swiftly occupied the Chinese capital. The troops of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy engaged in subsequent punitive military actions – although, during these 'punitive expeditions' or *Strafexpeditionen*, those captured and executed were not always proven

[449] Lehner, Georg: *Österreich-Ungarn in China? Das Gerücht einer territorialen Erwerbung und die österreichische Presse im Frühjahr 1899.* In: Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 110 (2002), pp. 125–149.

[450] The Boxer Rebellion was a revolt against foreigners in China that escalated into a civil war. Xenophobia along the Chinese coast led to the formation of the *Yihe tuan* 義和團 (Militia of Righteous Harmony), whose members were derisively labelled 'boxers' by Westerners due to the inclusion of the word 'fist' in the Chinese name (團). These insurgents established a bounty on the heads of all foreigners and Christians, irrespective of age or gender. Eventually, the organisation became a central force orchestrating attacks against foreigners, receiving effective support from the Chinese government. The uprising erupted in June 1900 when the Boxer groups entered Beijing. At the end of May 1900, diplomatic representatives in Beijing requested troops from foreign warships stationed in the Gulf of Bohai (渤海) to safeguard the legations.

guilty.[451] When news of the Boxer Rebellion reached opposition comic papers in the Hungarian Kingdom, they mocked the Dual Monarchy's pretensions as a great power. In contrast, a pro-government comic defended its role, framing the conflict within the broader ideology of civilization and colonialism. Notably, a poet in the publication used the first-person plural, momentarily turning the 'colonialist civilizing mission' into a shared burden of its hypocrisy[452]: "*Launch the ships! Let cannons roar! / Bring forth the blade, the guns of war! / Now let the yellow race be tamed, / Civilization's rule proclaimed. / Spreading the light of culture's flame / Is our creed, a noble claim! / With steel and fire, agile and sure, / Our triumph stands forevermore! / For we are made in Heaven's light, / We, the noble race of white. / Black, red, brown, and yellow – / Are but vermin bred in shadow. / What once was theirs by peaceful hand, / Shall now be ours by just command. / To purge the coloured breeds away – / A cleansing act, none dare gainsay."*[453]

After the foreign occupation of Tianjin on July 14, 1900, the foreign powers established the Tianjin Provisional Government, led by three officers and including representatives from all involved nations. Paul Bauer, a merchant and reserve artillery lieutenant, represented Austria-Hungary. Despite this administration, foreign troops, particularly Russian and German forces in the Hedong district, committed widespread atrocities, including harassment, humiliation, and sexual violence against the local population. On August 28, 1900, troops from all eight powers, including sixty Austrians and Hungarians, marched through Beijing's Forbidden City. From September onward, Austro-Hungarian forces participated in various operations in the Beijing area, joining other contingents in the search for suspected Boxers. For its involvement in the conflict, the Monarchy was granted a modest concession area of 0.61 square kilometres in Tianjin (which was partially destroyed during the fighting over several weeks), where a Hungarian-led garrison was established. The formal agreement concerning the concession (Tianjin Aoguo zujie zhangcheng hetong 天津奧國租界章程合同; Tianjin Austrian

[451] Michael Falser: *Habsburgs going global – The Austro-Hungarian Concession in Tientsin/Tianjin in China (1901–1917)*. Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna 2022. pp. 35-38.; See also: Clemens S. Wirleitner: *Extreme Gewaltanwendung österreichisch-ungarischer Truppen während des Yihetuan-Aufstands in China 1900/01 und die mediale Auseinandersetzung in der Presse der Sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterpartei Österreichs.* MA Thesis 2024. University of Vienna

[452] Kicsindi Edina: *Afrika belsejének feltárása és gyarmatosítása magyar szemmel: Európa és Afrika kapcsolata a magyar nyelvű sajtóban 1850–1918 között.* Phd disszertáció, Budapest, 2018. pp. 108-109.

[453] The Hungarian original: *Nossza elő hadi-hajók / Kardok, puskák, ágyúk! / Végre most a sárga fajt is / Megczivilizáljuk. / A kultúra terjesztése / A mi küldetésünk: / Terjesztgetni tűzzel-vassal / Soha nem is késünk. / Mi vagyunk az Isten másai, / Mi nemes fehérek. / A fekete, vörös, barna / Meg a sárga – féreg. / Mienk legyen minden, amit / Eddig békén bírt más. / Színes fajtát kiöldösni, / Az csak – féreg-irtás.* Civilizálunk. Borsszem Jankó, 33/1698. (25) sz., 1900. június 24., 2. Translated by the Author.

Concession Charter Contract) was signed on December 27, 1902, by the Tianjin Customs and Vice Consul Karl Bernauer. Between 1905 and 1917, the Austro-Hungarian concession was developed by the Hotung Baugesellschaft (奥界建造公司), a construction company led by navy officer Hugo Accurti from Rijeka. The firm contributed to projects such as Baron von Czikanny Straße (now: Shengli Road, 胜利路), the city's tramway, the quay, and the International Bridge.[454] The involvement of Habsburg navy officers and marines supported imperial economic interests. This marked the Monarchy's first and final imperialist venture in East Asia, driven by its desire to assert itself as a major European power. Following the conclusion of the First World War, the Monarchy lost its concession in Tianjin. The case of Tianjin and the presence of Austro-Hungary in the city – conceived as a hypercolonial space and a microcosm of imperial ambition and colonial mimicry – offers valuable insights for contemporary historians. Within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, groups such as Slavs, Romanians, Roma, Ruthenians, Slovaks, Serbs, Croats, Czechs, Italians, Jews, Muslims, and even some German-speaking peasants experienced cultural subordination and forced assimilation. Yet on the global stage, many of these same subalterns also participated in the subjugation of others, particularly through their involvement in Austro-Hungarian naval operations in Tianjin. This under-researched dynamic is crucial for understanding the complexities of (post-)imperial identity. This complex history also extends beyond military and social actions to include cultural consequences, such as the collection and dispersal of artifacts acquired during imperial conflicts. Recent provenance research has begun to shed light on the looting of Chinese cultural artifacts during the Boxer Rebellion by German and Austro-Hungarian forces. Projects like "Traces of the 'Boxer War' in German Museum Collections" are investigating thousands of objects in German museums that may have been acquired through looting during the conflict. These efforts aim to understand the historical mechanisms of ‘collecting’ and to address the colonial legacies embedded in museum collections. [455]

Japan's imperial expansion followed a different trajectory: it expanded gradually. Japan’s southernmost part, present-day Okinawa, was the territory of the Ryukyu

[454] Miloš Jovanović: *Imperial Discomfort in Post-Habsburg Tianjin*. In: In: Carabelli, G. et al (eds.): Sharpening the Haze. 2020. London: Ubiquity Press., p. 99. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5334/bcd.f

[455] German museums dig into legacy of Boxer Rebellion looting (Jens Kastner, Nikkei Asia, May 22, 2023) https://asia.nikkei.com/Life-Arts/Arts/German-museums-dig-into-legacy-of-Boxer-Rebellion-looting; Traces of the ‘Boxer War’ in German Museum Collections – A Joint Approach, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin https://www.smb.museum/en/museums-institutions/ethnologisches-museum/collection-research/research/traces-of-the-boxer-war/

Kingdom in the Middle Ages and only became part of Japan in 1879 (a move that China did not recognize until the Sino-Japanese War). In the north, today's Hokkaido – formerly known as Ezochi – became part of Japan in 1869, when it acquired its current name.[456] In the Meiji period, the ideology of colonizing the Ainu people in Hokkaido was legitimized under the Buiku (撫育 / 土人撫育) policy, Japan's approach to "civilizing" the Ainu as part of broader assimilation efforts. Though the term suggested "benevolent protection", it was, in practice, a colonial strategy aimed at erasing Ainu identity and integrating them into Japanese society. Following Hokkaido's incorporation in 1869, the government imposed Japanese language, customs, and agricultural practices while restricting Ainu traditions such as hunting, spiritual rituals, and their language. The 1899 Hokkaido Former Aborigines Protection Act institutionalized this approach, stripping the Ainu of their land and reclassifying them as "former aborigines", thereby legally denying their indigenous status. Ainu children were forced into Japanese-language schools, and cultural expressions like tattoos and ceremonies were suppressed. While framed as a protective measure, Buiku was fundamentally a colonial policy that impoverished the Ainu and denied them self-determination. Japan's treatment of the Ainu[457] paralleled Western colonial policies toward indigenous peoples and foreshadowed later assimilation efforts in Taiwan and Korea. The archipelago further north, the Kuril Islands (Chishima in Japanese), and Sakhalin (Karafuto in Japanese) have been subject to dispute since the beginning of the Bakufu era regarding whether they belonged to Japan or Russia. In the Russian-Japanese friendship treaty concluded in 1855, it was stipulated that among the Kuril Islands south of Etorofu, the small islands between the island of Kunashiri and Hokkaido were Japanese, while the island of Uruppu and those lying north of it were established as Russian territories. Since 1867, the island of Sakhalin has been a mixed (Japanese-Russian) inhabited area. Later, during the Meiji period, the Sakhalin-Kuril Exchange Agreement was concluded in 1875. As part of this agreement, Japan acquired the Chishima Islands, located north of Uruppu Island, in exchange for ceding control of Sakhalin Island. As a result, the entire Kuril Islands came under Japanese control.

The prelude to the Sino-Japanese War was the pro-Japanese Gapsin Coup in Korea, which failed due to Chinese intervention, leading to the Convention of Tientsin,

[456] Further reading on the Meiji colonization of the Ryukyu Kingdom and Hokkaido: Ayelet Zohar: *Introduction: Race and Empire in Meiji Japan*. In: The Asia-Pacific Journal | Japan Focus, Volume 18, Issue 20, 2020. pp. 1-12.
[457] Further reading on this topic: Noémi Godefroy: *The road from Ainu barbarian to Japanese primitive: a brief summary of Japanese-ainu relations in a historical perspective*, Consortium for Asian and African Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, pp. 201-212.

which mandated troop withdrawals. In 1894, China violated this agreement by sending forces to suppress the Tonghak Rebellion, triggering Japanese outrage and growing support for war. After the Sino-Japanese War, Japan defeated China and secured the Treaty of Shimonoseki (1895), which recognized Korea's independence, granted Japan Taiwan, the Pescadores, and Liaodong, and established Japan as an imperial power in the Western treaty port system.[458] In Conrad Totman's view, who summarised the Japanese imperialist expansion and the role of Korea, many Japanese leaders perceived existing geopolitical conditions as a manifestation of the political and cultural duality between the 'West' and the 'rest of the world'. These leaders envisioned a two-part world order where 'civilised states', leveraging their power and technological superiority, established empires, while 'primitive' societies lost their independence and became colonies of a state in the civilized world. The goal for these leaders was to propel Japan to catch up with the civilized world. Others approached the question within a broader ideological framework, drawing from European Social Darwinist views and a belief in the divine origin of the Japanese nation. Consequently, they concluded that Japan must strengthen itself to avoid succumbing to a colonial fate.[459]

It's not widely known, but Japan also had colonial ambitions in Hawaii. Between 1893 and 1895, the Hawaiian Islands became a focal point of inter-imperial rivalry and competing settler colonialisms, as Japan, the U.S., and Portugal vied for control over its lucrative sugar and pineapple plantations.[460] Less well known is the fact that the Ogasawara Islands officially became part of Japan on October 17, 1876. Located between mainland Japan and the Northern Marianas, they were first settled in 1830 by people speaking European and Pacific languages. After Japan laid claim to the islands in the 1860s and 1870s, a second wave of Japanese settlers arrived. Another aspect often framed as an example of Japanese colonization is the 1897 Japanese migration and settlement project in Mexico. The initiative was a direct practical application of the 1888 Treaty of Amity and Commerce, the first "equal treaty" Japan signed with a Western-style nation. This diplomatic breakthrough, which saw Mexico renounce extraterritoriality with tacit U.S. approval to counteract British and French commercial dominance, provided the

[458] Aziz Krich: *Overseas military expansionism was an essential element of domestic politics in the Meiji period. Discuss* pp 6-7. https://www.academia.edu/3657399/Overseas_military_expansionism_was_an_essential_element_of_domestic_politics_in_the_Meiji_period_Discuss (accessed: 2025 March)

[459] Conrad Totman: *Japán története*, Bp., Osiris Kiadó, 2006., pp. 442-443.

[460] Christen Sasaki: *Pacific Confluence: Fighting over the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Hawai'i.* University of California Press, 2022.

essential legal framework for Japanese citizens to travel, reside, and own land in Mexico as equals. On March 24, 1897, this legal foundation allowed a group of approximately 34 educated Japanese men to depart Yokohama aboard the 4,000-ton British steamer SS Gaelic. Unlike typical laborers, these members of a state-supported overseas settlement project, led by Viscount Takeaki Enomoto (榎本武揚), intended to establish a coffee plantation in Escuintla, Chiapas. Although the agricultural venture failed within months due to tropical diseases and falling coffee prices, the settlers remained in Mexico under the protections of the 1888 treaty. They eventually formed the Japan-Mexico Joint Venture Company (日墨共同会社), establishing the first permanent Japanese-Mexican community in Latin America and demonstrating that Japan could manage its own overseas interests as a sovereign power.[461]

Taiwan became Japan's first colony, and the Japanese funded their subsequent industrial and military developments using reparations obtained from China after the Sino-Japanese War. The colonial government launched a brutal pacification campaign in 1910, which was formally declared complete by 1915. Korea was made a Japanese protectorate in 1905 (after the Russo-Japanese war) and officially annexed as a colony in 1910. Another important focus of Japan’s expansion was Manchuria, a resource-rich region in northeastern China that was strategically contested by China, Russia, and Japan. Until 1913, Japanese control in the region was based on military, economic, and diplomatic influence. After the Russo-Japanese War, Japan gained key ports like Port Arthur and Dalian and controlled the South Manchuria Railway, strengthening its economic position. Japan also used diplomatic leverage, particularly through the Treaty of Portsmouth, to solidify its dominance. While China retained nominal control, Japan’s influence over the region’s economy and politics grew significantly during this period. By 1911, Japan’s economic ventures in Manchuria yielded significant profits. Japanese cotton goods accounted for 78.6% of Manchuria's imports, replacing British and American textiles. Moreover, from 1895 onwards, 57 Japanese factories were established in the region. Manchuria thus served as a vital outlet for Japan’s economic growth, generating wealth that helped fund the military to sustain its strategic advantage.[462]

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[461] Ruth Mandujano *López: Steamships across the Pacific - Maritime Journeys between Mexico, China, and Japan, 1867–1914.* Hong Kong University Press, 2025.

[462] Aziz Krich: *Overseas military expansionism was an essential element of domestic politics in the Meiji period. Discuss* p. 11. https://www.academia.edu/3657399/Overseas_military_expansionism_was_an_essential_element_of_domestic_politics_in_the_Meiji_period_Discuss (accessed: 2025 March)

In late 19th-century Japan, race became a crucial issue, not as an abstract concept but in terms of its global hierarchy and implications for Japan's national identity and modernization. The idea of race, newly formulated in the West, was closely tied to human progress and modernization. As Japan sought to modernize, it also had to confront racial perceptions and foreign racism, which shaped its evolving society and culture. By the late 1880s, Japan's leadership faced a crisis regarding racial integration. Western powers demanded that their residents be allowed to live among ordinary Japanese rather than in segregated areas. This raised concerns beyond sovereignty – some feared that cohabitation might lead to mixed marriages and, ultimately, the weakening or even extinction of the Japanese population, perceived as the less "fit" group. Japan's elites faced a dilemma in adopting Western racial theories. These theories positioned Japan as inferior to the West, contradicting both its historical self-image and its aspirations for parity with Western nations. Since race was so deeply ingrained in Western thought, challenging it seemed nearly impossible. Initially, Japan lacked native scholars capable of critically engaging with these ideas. In the popular sphere, pre-existing aesthetic preferences for lighter skin reinforced acceptance of Western racial hierarchies. Historically, pale skin signified higher status, as it distinguished those who worked indoors from laborers exposed to the sun. Over time, sexual selection among elites further reinforced this aesthetic. The primary issue Meiji intellectuals faced was not with racial theories themselves but with Japan's placement within them. Their concerns were less about questioning race as a concept and more about how it positioned Japan relative to Europeans and other East Asians. Rather than challenging Western racial theories, Meiji scholars largely accepted them. This attitude manifested in Japan's emulation of Western racial exhibitions. In 1903, the Academic Human Pavilion at the Osaka Industrial Fair displayed various ethnic groups in a manner similar to "human zoos" in Europe and North America. The exhibition included Okinawans, Ainu, Taiwanese, a Turk, an African, a Javanese, and South Asian Indians – but notably excluded Europeans. Protests, particularly from Chinese, Korean, and Okinawan groups, led to the removal of their exhibits, yet the racial hierarchies implied by the event persisted in Japanese attitudes.[463]

[463] Rotem Kowner: *Japan and the Rise of the Idea of Race: The Meiji Era Fusion of Foreign and Domestic Constructions*. In: Yoneyuki Sugita: Social Commentary on State and Society in Modern Japan. Springer, 2016. pp. 31-43.

As mentioned in a joint Japanese-Chinese research study in 2006,[464] the reasons Japan ultimately avoided a colonial fate, escaping the same sacrifices as China, can be attributed to several factors. In the initial stages, Western great powers were primarily focused on China, considering Japan a small and peripheral country. Engaged in the aftermath of the First and Second Opium Wars,[465] they lacked the resources and capacity to prioritize Japan. Researchers argue that this explains why it was the Americans, rather than the British or the French, who influenced Japan to 'open up'. Japanese leaders also drew lessons from the subjugation of China by Western powers, allowing them time to prepare. Although Japan did not open willingly, the Japanese were better prepared than their China-centric counterparts. Moreover, education in Japan was at a high level, providing the Japanese with a broad understanding of the world outside their country. Their worldview was not Japan-centred, and they were acutely aware of their technological and societal lag compared to the West. During the Edo period, *Rangaku*, or the Dutch language, thrived, facilitating the influx of Western scientific knowledge into Japan. Given that members of Japan's ruling elite were predominantly from the warrior class, they quickly recognized the fundamental importance of elevating Japan's capabilities to match those of the West. Conversely, in Qing China, proficiency in the sciences and arts held greater value than military prowess.[466] Turan Kayaoğlu argues that it was Japan's alignment with Western norms that protected it from major foreign interference, giving it the freedom to modernize and grow economically.[467] This was due to several geopolitical factors. After losing the Crimean War, Russia turned eastward, threatening British interests in Asia through the expansion of the Trans-Siberian Railway. Britain, unable to respond directly, encouraged Japan to build naval strength as a counterweight and saw potential in a future alliance. Meanwhile, Germany, under Kaiser Wilhelm II, became more active in East Asia, motivated by access to Chinese markets. At the same time, the Franco-Russian naval alliance prevented any single Western power from dominating the region. Although Japan's 1895 victory over China raised concerns, Britain's refusal to join the Triple Intervention[468] suggested reluctance to oppose Japan –

[464] The Japan-China Joint History Research was a collaborative project initiated by the governments of both countries in 2006. Renowned Japanese and Chinese scientists actively participated in the research, and the results were regularly published.
[465] first: 1839-1842, second: 1856-1860
[466] Kitaoka Shin'ichi: *Inception of a Modern Relationship* In.: Japan-China Joint History Research Report (provisional translation) – Modern and Contemporary History, Vol 1., 2011., pp. 8-10.
[467] Turan Kayaoğlu: *Legal Imperialism: Sovereignty and Extraterritoriality in Japan, the Ottoman Empire, and China.* University of Washington. 2010. pp. 70-73.
[468] The Triple Intervention (1895) was a diplomatic response by Russia, France, and Germany to Japan's victory in the

and potentially an interest in aligning with Japan against Russia in the future.

Bianco T. 1904, Political caricature of the Russo-Japanese war, Tsar Nicholas with a weapon pointed at the Japanese emperor; all other European monarchs, including Franz Joseph I., are asleep (ÖNB)

Armed conflicts

Between 1868 and 1913, Japan experienced significant armed conflicts, while the Hungarian Kingdom remained relatively stable, participating only in Austria-Hungary's imperial military campaigns. Japan's conflicts began with the Boshin War (1868–1869), a civil war that led to the overthrow of the Tokugawa shogunate and the establishment of the Meiji government. Japan's first international military operation, the 1874 Taiwan expedition, served as both a demonstration of its growing military power and a means to gain international recognition of its sovereignty. Officially framed as retribution for the killing of 54 Ryukyuan sailors, the operation allowed Japan to project military authority overseas. Beyond punitive action, Japan aimed to establish colonies in eastern Taiwan, justify its expansionist ambitions, and address domestic unrest. The mission also reinforced a civilizational hierarchy, with Japan portraying itself as superior to the 'savage' Taiwanese. Media narratives of cannibalism and primitive lifestyles further emphasized this contrast, positioning Japan as a modern, authoritative power on the global stage.[469]

First Sino-Japanese War. It forced Japan to return the Liaodong Peninsula, which it had captured from China.

[469] Aziz Krich: *Overseas military expansionism was an essential element of domestic politics in the Meiji period. Discuss* pp 4-5. https://www.academia.edu/3657399/Overseas_military_expansionism_was_an_essential_element_of_domestic_politics_in_the_Meiji_period_Discuss (accessed: 2025 March)

This was followed by the Satsuma Rebellion (1877), an armed uprising by discontented samurai against the Meiji state, marking the final attempt to resist modernization. After stabilizing its internal affairs, Japan turned to foreign expansion, engaging in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), which secured Korea as a Japanese sphere of influence, and later the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), a major conflict that demonstrated Japan's military strength on the world stage. These wars resulted in significant casualties but also cemented Japan's status as a rising global power.

In contrast, the Hungarian Kingdom, as part of Austria-Hungary, did not experience large-scale warfare on its own territory. The most notable military engagement was the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia (1878), a campaign to assert control over the region, which involved relatively limited fighting. Hungarian soldiers also participated in international conflicts as part of the empire's forces, including the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion in China (1900) and military preparations during the Balkan Wars (1912–1913), though Hungary itself was not directly involved in the fighting.

Conclusion

Based on the detailed data discussed above, comparing the developmental levels of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Japan during the period from 1868 to 1913 reveals the following insights: Japan's population increased by 60%, whereas Hungary's saw a 30% increase. In the early 20th century, the Japanese enjoyed a seven-year longer life expectancy compared to the people of Hungary. In 1868, the literacy rate among Japanese males stood at 80%, roughly twice that of Hungary. By the 1890s, however, Hungary had surpassed Japan in the number of newspapers, with approximately 15% more publications. Among 170 ranked universities assessed by student enrolment in the early 1900s, the University of Budapest ranked fifth, while the University of Tokyo ranked twenty-third. Both countries were primarily agrarian, but by 1910, agriculture's influence dropped to approximately 60% in Hungary and 40% in Japan. The length of laid railway tracks in Hungary increased tenfold during the analyzed period, whereas in Japan, it increased four hundredfold. In terms of railway safety around 1900, Austrian and Hungarian railways were among the safest in comparison with Japan (and the world as well), particularly in terms of fatalities, with Japan showing a higher injury incidence

despite a relatively similar death rate. In Austria in 1900, 73,553,000 passengers were carried, with 70 deaths and 311 injuries, which equals about 0.95 deaths and 4.23 injuries per one million passengers. In Hungary in 1901, 67,044,000 passengers resulted in 87 deaths and 83 injuries, corresponding to about 1.30 deaths and 1.24 injuries per one million passengers. In Japan (1899–1900), 102,116,000 passengers experienced 141 deaths and 1,192 injuries, or roughly 1.38 deaths and 11.67 injuries per one million passengers. On this basis, Austria appears to have the lowest mortality rate, followed by Hungary and then Japan, while Hungary shows the lowest injury rate, significantly lower than Austria and especially Japan, where injuries were comparatively much more frequent.[470] Notably, Japan transitioned to the gold standard in 1897, five years after the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, marking a significant step in their technical integration into the new financial world order.

We must acknowledge that for modernization, integration into the new world order, and economic recovery, both the Hungarian Kingdom in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Japanese Empire needed models, and in this quest, Hungary had an advantage, as it received nearly ready-made plans through the Monarchy without requiring significant financial or social sacrifices. In contrast, Japan faced a daunting task, requiring extraordinary effort and substantial financial investment to embrace the policy of "learning from the Western world". Moreover, the challenges of the 19th century, including the prevalence of social Darwinism[471] towards the end of the century, which established a racial hierarchy placing white people at the top, created significant obstacles for Japan, leaving it in a disadvantaged position for an extended period. Additionally, Japan was more significantly threatened by economic and financial colonisation than Hungary within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

If we return to the beginning of this chapter and scrutinize Benedek Balogh Barátosi’s statement, it becomes evident that he exaggerated Hungary's development after 1867, claiming it was unrivaled in history. Despite this exaggeration, Hungary’s economic growth rate during this period still ranked among the four or five highest in the

[470] Budapesti Hírlap, 1903-12-13

[471] Social Darwinism in the 19th century, with echoes that persisted into the latter half of the 20th century, represented a prevailing worldview. It promoted a hierarchical understanding of societies based on perceived or actual political power relations, rather than a nuanced appreciation of foreign cultures derived from experience and observation.

world, with Argentina recording the fastest growth.[472] While Hungary modernized within the framework of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Japan's modernization after 1868 brought it into direct competition with European powers, although its rapid economic development accelerated only after the 1890s. During the period 1890–1913, however, Japan experienced relatively rapid economic expansion, placing it among the four or five fastest-growing economies alongside Hungary. Ultimately, economic growth is the only somewhat justifiable and verifiable aspect of Barátosi's statement; on balance, his argument was likely driven more by nationalist sentiment than by actual economic or historical data. Barátosi was a self-made amateur anthropologist (who later became an enthusiastic believer in Turanism and consistently sought connections between the Japanese and the Hungarians, even where none were evident) rather than an economist or historian, and he lacked substantive expertise in any field, which likely led him to rely on ethnocentric interpretations.

Waterfront Landscape, silk painting, early 20th century (Jósa András Múzeum)

[472] Argentina is often cited as the standout performer during this period. Between 1870 and 1913, it transformed from a relatively underdeveloped economy into one of the world's wealthiest nations per capita, driven by massive exports of beef, wheat, and wool, fueled by European demand and immigration. Its growth was exceptional, outpacing many established powers, thanks to fertile land, foreign investment (especially from Britain), and an open economy. It is important to acknowledge that while Argentina's economy grew rapidly and its per capita income increased significantly, this growth was not always evenly spread, with much of the wealth concentrated in the hands of a small elite. Furthermore, political instability during this period occasionally impeded the country's full economic potential.

Chapter Two.

Expeditions

The evolution of marine sailing and the Double Monarchy's Navy in Asia – Expeditions to Japan: The Austro-Hungarian East Asian Expedition (1868-1871) – The Széchenyi Expedition (1877-80) – The Zrínyi Corvette with a Hungarian ship's doctor in Japan (1890-92) – Franz Ferdinand's journey to Japan (1892-93) – Japanese expeditions to the West, and the Iwakura mission

The evolution of marine sailing and the Double Monarchy's Navy in Asia

Modern seafaring began in Europe due to the technical and economic achievements from the middle of the 19th century. This development was influenced by the Industrial Revolution in Britain, global economic changes, and the embrace of free trade. After 19th-century steamboat experiments, by the end of the fifties, engineers developed more efficient engines that consumed only two-thirds of the coal they used to. The construction of the Suez Canal began in 1857, and upon its completion, both freight and warships' travel time in East Asia were shortened by 30-40 days.[473] As a result, by the second half of the 19th century, the warships of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had reached distant locations. From the end of the 19th century to the last year of peace in 1913, similar to nations with larger navies, they were consistently present in East Asia through a rotating system, known as station ships or 'mission cruisers'.[474] These larger ships formed the central element of the new fleet organisation principles. The Monarchy's mission cruisers' expeditions into Asian waters were primarily limited to demonstrating the Dual Monarchy's presence and were utilised for scientific purposes (geographical and natural science research) and establishing trade relations. The missions' tasks included naval training, protecting citizens working in Hungarian and Austrian trade and diplomatic missions overseas, safeguarding joint embassies and consulates, observing international treaties, contributing to their favourable conclusion, and simultaneously promoting Austria-Hungary's war flag to foreign countries in order to enhance the international authority of the Monarchy. (It is worth noting that the supposedly harmless concept of "flag-promotion naval diplomacy", combined with the emphasis on "scientific tasks" in

[473] Kemény Ödön: *A tengeri kereskedelem*. Bp., 1906., p. 26.
[474] The question of mission cruisers was raised in 1883 when Admiral Baron Max von Sterneck assumed command of the Navy.

these journeys, can also be interpreted as a contemporary historical narrative – still widely used in historiography – that obscures the underlying colonialist intentions behind these endeavors.) Several ships participated in East Asian missions; their details are provided in a separate chronological table in the ***Appendix***.

Austro-Hungarian Navy souvenir discharge flag (Abschiedsfahne / Abmusterungsfahne), private collection

Expeditions to Japan: The Austro-Hungarian East Asian Expedition (1868-1871)

The first significant endeavour in the series of naval expeditions by the Monarchy was the *East Asian Expedition*, which also reached Japan. Beginning in the 1860s, prominent Austrian government circles advocated the establishment of trade relations in Asia, particularly in China, Japan, and Siam (now Thailand). The departure had to be postponed several times for economic and political reasons, including the Prussian-Austrian War of 1866 and the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. After the compromise, the plan resurfaced, with the nearing completion of the Suez Canal playing a decisive role. The Monarchy's commercial position in sea shipping promised a bright future, given that ships could reach East Asia in significantly less time. The 1877 book *Customs Policy of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy*[475] summarises this as follows: since the development of steamships, the focus of larger nations has turned towards the peoples and countries of East Asia. This region offered access to large quantities of raw products and manufactured goods, creating new markets for the Western states. The trend intensified, especially after North America, France, and England lifted the traditional seclusion policies of certain Asian countries in these regions. Consequently, numerous nations began sending large expeditions to East Asian waters, forging trade agreements with the local nations. Despite being largely unsupported by the government, the Austrian navy, left to its own devices, struggled to establish a significant presence in these regions. However, in the 1860s, certain insightful individuals, including Revoltella,[476] a Trieste shipowner, recognized the importance of East Asia for Austria. In his 1863 pamphlet, Revoltella strongly highlighted the disadvantages Austria faced by not participating actively in world trade. In response to this perspective, a special committee was appointed by Franz Joseph I's decision on February 9, 1864. The committee, whose opinion was published in 1865 under the title "*Austria's Unfavourable Position in World Trade and the Means to Prevent It"*, emphasised the necessity of sending expeditions to East Asia. The primary goal of these expeditions was to conclude commercial and shipping agreements with the governments of China, Siam, and Japan, ensuring that Austrian citizens, their property, and the Austrian flag would enjoy the same rights as

[475] Metlekovits Sándor: *Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia vámpolitikája 1850-től kezdve napjainkig*. Bp., Franklin Társulat, 1877., pp. 122-124.
[476] Pasquale Revoltella (1795-1869) was Trieste's most outstanding personality – a prominent businessman and politician.

those of other nations already engaged in East Asian trade. The realisation of such advantages from the peoples of East Asia necessitated sending expeditions. Franz Joseph I entertained the proposal for an expedition into East Asian waters for commercial and political purposes as early as March 21, 1866. However, the prevailing wartime conditions were unfavourable for launching the expedition, leading to a temporary suspension of the initiative. Towards the end of 1866, the Trieste Stock Exchange Committee once again advocated for the East Asian expedition. On February 27, 1867, Franz Joseph I approved the endeavour and ordered its initiation. Understandably, the ongoing conciliation efforts with Hungary initially impeded the execution of the plan. Eventually, through collaborative efforts between the Hungarian and Austrian governments, the expedition plan was jointly established, leading to its successful realisation.

While the Austrians embraced the plan from 1863, a similar idea had been proposed in Hungary much earlier – dating back to 1807. István Vedres, the municipal architect of Szeged at the time, advocated for an exploratory trip to East Asia as part of a comprehensive program. In light of his vision, travel companies would be established to enhance knowledge about foreign countries. Three such companies were proposed to implement the plan: the Western Company, tasked with mapping Western European countries, the Northern Company, dedicated to studying other parts of Europe and Russia, and the Eastern Company, focusing on investigating the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and East Asia. In Vedres' concept, each of the three companies would organise expeditions featuring a diverse team, including a geographer, philologist, doctor, painter, hydraulic engineer, instrument engineer, technologist, agricultural engineer, and military expert. These expeditions would compile collections and report back to the respective company that sponsored them.[477] István Vedres' vision was never realised, in contrast to the Austrian vision, which came to fruition sixty years later. The *Austro-Hungarian East Asian Expedition (Osztrák-Magyar Kelet-ázsiai Expedíció)*, conceived at the behest of Austrian trade and industrial circles, set sail in the fall of 1868. The Hungarian government contributed 30%, or 159,900 Forint, to the costs of this large-scale enterprise (approximately 533,000 Forint), allocated for joint military affairs as defined in the Compromise, proportional to their financial contributions.[478] Hungarian merchants and

[477] Irina V. Popova-Novak: *A nemzet felfedezésének Odüsszeiája – Magyarok Magyarországon és külföldön*, 1750-1850. In: Korall Társadalomtörténeti Folyóirat, 2006. 26. szám; translated by: Gábor Kármán

[478] Kaas Ivor, Cserei Manó: *Keletázsiai Expeditió. I. Gibraltár és Marokkó kereskedelmi viszonyairól.* In: Közlemények a Földmivelés-, Ipar- és Kereskedelemügyi Magyar Kir. Miniszterium Köréből. II. évf. I. füzet p. II.

industrialists were largely opposed to the expedition. In their view, a comprehensive survey should have preceded the undertaking, and ships should have been dispatched only after completion and analysis of such a survey.[479] Commercial disputes also arose in relation to the mission. On April 20, 1868, during a meeting of the Hungarian Royal Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Trade, concerning the East Asian enterprise, a speaker suggested exploring markets for Hungarian flour and wine – the two most crucial domestic exports at that time – in South America, rather than in East Asia. (This is interesting in light of the fact that, as early as 1863, Endre Jalics, president of the Budapest Chamber of Commerce, was about to send 10,000 bottles of excellent Villányi and Ménesi wine to Japan in response to an order, and had considered adding a cabinet to this shipment, which was to be filled with bottles of these wines and shipped back from Japan so that, once opened in Hungary, he could demonstrate that Hungarian wine could withstand equatorial heat time and time again.)[480] The perspective of the Hungarian diplomat László Hengelmüller, one of the Hungarian delegates of the expedition, is also intriguing in relation to the enterprise: "*Neither in our country (Hungary) nor in the provinces beyond the Leitha (i.e., in Austria), can you find such a trading house that possesses the necessary assets for a large-scale import and export trade. (…) In such circumstances, a business with an appropriate capital and capability of placing significant orders and taking over more notable deliveries, can only be established by combining joint forces, i.e., through a joint-stock company.*"[481] The proposed joint-stock company was never established, perhaps due to the rather fanciful nature of the idea. The Monarchy could only make a minimal presence in Asian markets. Furthermore, this limited market presence was hindered by insufficient capital, knowledge, and prior studies. Even if a private company or merchant with substantial capital had aimed to establish itself in Asia, it could not have anticipated assistance from the Monarchy at the time of the expedition. László Hengelmüller expressed his views on this matter: "*The desire of Austrian industrialists and traders for young merchants to accompany the expedition and work for Chinese and Japanese establishments will not materialise, as the state's role is merely to establish the general conditions for traffic; the rest falls within the realm of private enterprise!*"[482] The Hungarian Academy of Sciences also joined the

[479] Peter Pantzer: *Japan und Österreich-Ungarn – die diplomatischen, wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Beziehungen von ihrer Aufnahme bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*. Wien, Eigenverlag, 1973.
[480] Vasárnapi Ujság, 1863-03-15.
[481] Józsa Sándor: *Kína és az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia*. Bp., Akadémiai Kiadó, 1966., p. 22.
[482] *Magyarország Anyagi Érdekei* c. nemzetgazdasági folyóirat, 1868. ápr. 13.

discussion, submitting to the government: "*...given the current state of our domestic trade, the benefits of the Asian expedition for us Hungarians do not yet match the proportion of the costs we bear. It would be highly desirable for our disadvantage to be replaced by a scientific outcome*."[483] The Joint Naval Command designated two warships for the journey: the screw frigate Donau, led by Captain von Wiplinger, and the armoured corvette Erzherzog Friedrich, commanded by Captain von Pitner. Admiral Anton von Petz, a war-trained and experienced sailor, directed the expedition as an ambassador plenipotentiary and ministerial commissioner. The departure of the Austro-Hungarian East Asian Expedition was met with unusual silence in the Hungarian press, and contemporary news coverage of the event in Hungary is hard to find.[484] Few people are aware that the ostensibly friendly commercial expedition had a military dimension, openly acknowledged. In planning the expedition to East Asia, the mindset was clear: "*The cultural status of these nations necessitates that the involved state must first exhibit a certain military power. By arriving with a fleet of ships, it demonstrates its citizens' legitimate claim to protection, paving the way for subsequent negotiations to regulate future commercial transactions.*"[485] At that time, the Dual Monarchy lacked the capability to send a large fleet of ships, so only two vessels were launched, equipped with weapons for safety. Caution was evident as the guns on board the Donau were only partially dismantled.[486] Given the uncertain political landscape upon their journey to Japan, where the Meiji takeover had recently occurred in 1868, they were unsure of the political situation awaiting them. In anticipation of various scenarios, Admiral Petz and his delegation were provided with three credentials by the competent authorities. One was addressed to the Emperor of Japan, another to the shogun, and a third reserved for the possibility that neither held power, in which case it was intended for the daimyo, a feudal ruler possessing the greatest political authority.[487]

Hungarians' participation in the expedition was limited. The trade minister at the time entrusted three individuals with participation: publicist Ivor Kaas, journalist and merchant Manó Cserei, and naturalist and ethnographer János Xántus. Additionally, diplomats Géza Bernáth and László Hengelmüller were appointed to the officer corps. It appears another Hungarian had been appointed to join the expedition, but for unknown

[483] Magyar Országos Levéltár FIK. Eln. 1868/343.
[484] One article about it can be found here: *Képek Japánból*, Vasárnapi Újság, 1869. május 2., pp. 240-242.
[485] Metlekovits Sándor: *Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia vámpolitikája 1850-től kezdve napjainkig*. Budapest, 1877. Franklin Társulat. P. 123.
[486] エルンスト・ラーシュ、ペーター・パンツァー: オーストリア・日本 (2005) p. 25.
[487] エルンスト・ラーシュ、ペーター・パンツァー: オーストリア・日本 (2005) p. 26.

reasons he failed to appear on the day of departure. In a letter dated 7 October 1868, Manó Cserei and Ivor Kaas wrote that after boarding the S.M.S. Erzherzog Friedrich with Karl von Scherzer, they discovered that József Székács had withdrawn from the mission, and his vacant cabin had been converted into a lounge with a piano.[488] Géza Bernáth's identity remains somewhat obscure; what is known is that he served as the legation secretary in Beijing. László Hengelmüller (Ladislaus Freiherr Hengelmüller von Hengervár, also known as Báró Hengervári Hengelmüller László) acted as the attaché of the consulate general in the expedition. (Later, for two decades, he served as the ambassador of Austria-Hungary in Washington and then as the ambassador to the United States.) During pre-departure negotiations, Hungarian scientists advocated for the inclusion of a Hungarian naturalist and taxidermist in the expedition. The choice ultimately fell on János Xántus, the director of the Budapest zoo at that time. In order to 'prevent misunderstandings', János Xántus participated in the enterprise on behalf of the Minister of Culture, József Eötvös, with a separate contract and budget.[489] His mission was primarily focused on expanding and establishing the natural history, folklore, and book collections of Hungarian public institutions such as the Hungarian National Museum, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and Royal Hungarian University. The contract granted Xántus complete freedom, including a clause allowing him to leave the expedition at any time and continue his collection wherever he pleased. Xántus joined the expedition in Singapore in April 1869.[490] During his time in Japan, he visited the cities of Hirado, Osaka, Hyogo, and Yokohama, staying in the country for approximately one month.[491] The expedition's ships departed from Trieste at the end of October 1868,

[488] MNL OL FIK Eln. K 167 1869/18.

[489] One for the record: I have a small personal story about this sentence. Matthew Rampley, an *extraordinary professor* (official title) at Masaryk University, during the *Österreich-Ungarn im weltweiten Kolonialsystem* conference in Vienna (2025), discussed Hungary's involvement in the Austro-Hungarian East Asian expedition and made the following statement – giving my thoughts an *unwelcome* twist – based on this sentence of mine. "*The Hungarian government sought to develop a* ***separate set of diplomatic and state relations*** *with Japan.*" – said the professor, who, as he admitted, encountered this idea *in my Hungarian monograph*. Apart from the issue of academic misconduct, it never ceases to amaze me how *extraordinarily low* even extraordinary professors can score on a simple text comprehension test – and this was not the first time my ideas had been stolen, misrepresented, twisted, or even turned on their head in an *academic* setting. Matthew Rampley recast my argument as if the Hungarian government were actively seeking '*separate*' (?) relations – a historically unsupported assertion that serves to *create his own narrative*. See: on-site recording of "*Reflections on recent debates and controversies in global history of Austria-Hungary (Matthew Rampley)*" Panel4.mp3, https://ucloud.univie.ac.at/index.php/s/byndwaio9ZS2TyJ?dir=/&editing=false&openfile=true (between timestamps -1:16:19 and -1:15:47; accessed: 2025 Nov.) The good thing in this story is that the extraordinary professor forgot to mention my name; in the end, I can at least take some grim satisfaction that academic standards were ignored - otherwise, I would be the one facing harsh criticism for a statement I never made and for being ahistorical, while our extraordinary professor escapes *extraordinarily unscathed*.

[490] *Maki-e – Válogatás a Hopp Ferenc Kelet-Ázsiai Művészeti Múzeum 19. századi japán lakkgyűjteményéből* (DVD) 2007.

[491] Wilhelm Gábor: *The Japanese Collection of the Museum of Ethnography of Budapest*. Presentation at *Non-European*

heading towards Southeast Asia by circumventing Africa (note that the Suez Canal was completed a year later). They made stops of varying durations in Singapore, Bangkok, Siam, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Tianjin, and Beijing. The *Erzherzog Friedrich*, carrying János Xántus, reached Nagasaki on September 6, 1869. The *Donau* arrived in Nagasaki on September 16, 1869, where the *Erzherzog Friedrich* had been awaiting its arrival for ten days.[492] Subsequently, both ships set sail together for the port of Yokohama, making stops in Kobe (Hyogo) and Osaka.[493] Their journey was marked by the challenges of a typical autumn typhoon, making progress difficult. Despite the adverse weather conditions, both ships successfully entered the port of Yokohama on the second of October.[494] (The Japan Times reported their arrival on its front page on 9 October, outlining the delegation's goal and listing the names of its leaders and captains.)[495] On the third of October 1869, Austria-Hungary saluted the flag of Japan with 21 cannon shots, reciprocated promptly by the Japanese artillery.[496] The delegation was accorded a grand reception by the Japanese authorities. On 6th October, the two expedition ships led by Petz anchored in front of Tokyo, receiving a welcoming salute of 15 cannon shots. The delegation was then received with a great ceremony at the imperial Hama Goten Palace, located on the site of today's Hama Rikyu Garden. In Meiji 2 (1869), on September 3 (October 7 in the modern calendar), Baron Anton Petz, and his entourage entered the Takawana Reception Hall (高輪接遇所), which they also used as their accommodation during their stay. The hall had previously been used by the British and had essentially served as the British legation, located in front of Sengaku-ji Temple (now part of the Sengakuji-mae Children's Park in Takanawa 2-chome). During their stay, the Austro-Hungarian Empire flag was displayed there. Negotiations commenced on 8th October. Only ten days after the initiation of negotiations, on the 18th October,[497] the main diplomatic objective of the expedition – establishing a friendship, trade, and shipping agreement – was successfully formalised between the Dual Monarchy and Japan. (Further details about the treaty and its subsequent developments will be discussed in more depth later.)

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ethnographical collections in Central and Eastern Europe ECHO Workshop, Budapest, 2004.March

[492] According to the old Japanese calendar: Meiji year 2, 8th month 11. The screw frigate Donau arrived at Nagasaki harbor at 1:00 p.m.

[493] The Japan Times' Overland Mail, Vol. VII., No. 102., 9. Oct. 1869.

[494] According to the old Japanese calendar: Meiji 2nd year, 8th month 27.

[495] The Japan Times' Overland Mail, Vol. VII. No. 102, 9. October, 1869.

[496] ペーター・パンツァー: 日本オーストリア関係史、創造社、昭和五十九年, p. 25.

[497] Meiji Year 2, 14th Sept.

The Japanese emperor received the Austro-Hungarian delegation in Tokyo on October 16, and the official gift-giving ceremony was held that afternoon. Among the Austro-Hungarian gifts were life-size Carrara marble statues of the Austrian ruler, Emperor Franz Joseph I, and Empress Elisabeth, along with a pair of Lobmeyer crystal vases, glass goblets with fruits made out of sugar, glasses, a Hungarian decorative saddle with full equipment, a coin collection made up of metal coins used in the Monarchy, photo albums (including one about hunting in the Hungarian Kingdom), and a stereo photo viewer (with 36 stereo pictures by Oscar Kramer). Additionally, scores of Austrian and Hungarian songs were included in the gifts. The Japanese prime minister and foreign minister received a Schönberger wall clock, a silver pistol, decorative vases, a Wertheim safe, and a selection of Austro-Hungarian wines as gifts.[498] Larger offices and institutions were not excluded from the generosity of gifts either. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs received field telegraphs and a Starke-Gentilli distance measuring instrument, along with infantry and hunting weapons complete with ammunition. The Tokyo General Hospital was presented with medical textbooks, medicines, and instruments for examining the blind. The Japanese Institute of Foreign Sciences, later evolving into the University of Tokyo, received a 13-volume series on the Novara expedition, encompassing geographic, historical, zoological, and botanical textbooks. Additionally, they were given a Japanese-Austrian dictionary by the Austrian scientist Dr. Pfizmaier, as well as a book of 'Our Father' translated into 200 languages.[499]

There is an amusing story about the gifting of the field telegraph, told by Anton Johannes Cornelis Geerts, a Dutch chemist, encyclopedist, and university teacher who later became an army pharmacist and a chemistry instructor in Japan. (He arrived in July 1869 to teach physics and chemistry at Nagasaki Medical School.)

> "*The field telegraph, presented to the Emperor last year by the Austro-Hungarian Expedition led by Baron von Petz, was assembled at the Palace in the following manner: an office was set up in a large tent in the center of the Imperial Palace garden, while another was established at His Majesty's study room. Numerous visitors were invited by His Majesty, including three members of the Imperial Family, the First Minister of the Grand Council of State, and many others (...). All these individuals were gathered in the large tent, anxiously awaiting the first*

[498] Dr. Karl von Scherzer: *Fachmännische Berichte die Österreichisch-Ungarische Expedition nach Siam, China und Japan (1868-1871)*. Verlag von Julius Mayer, 1872. pp. 418-494.
[499] Dr. Karl von Scherzer: *Fachmännische Berichte die Österreichisch-Ungarische Expedition nach Siam, China und Japan (1868-1871)*. Verlag von Julius Mayer, 1872. pp. 418-494.

transmission from His Majesty. Two Japanese officials who had acquired some telegraph skills in Europe served as operators. The first message arrived: 'The Emperor is here and ready to see the instrument in operation at any time'. The reply was extremely courteous, expressing gratitude for His Majesty's gracious presence. This was immediately followed by another telegraphic message: 'The Emperor has been astonished to learn that the West is so amazing. The Emperor is greatly impressed by the marvelous Western inventions'. The Minister of the Right responded, and shortly afterward, the Emperor sent another question: "Who is in the big tent? And what are they doing there?' The answer included the names of those present, followed by: 'With the utmost respect, all those here await Your Majesty's command'. Immediately after, a message from His Majesty arrived: 'Send us something pleasant'. Upon receiving this telegram, confusion and bewilderment stirred in the large tent. What could they say to entertain His Majesty without compromising the high regard they held for him? A member of the Grand Council of State suggested: 'This day will long remain in the annals of the empire as one of the most remarkable occasions on which His Majesty the Emperor saw the telegraph function for the first time'. However, this was far from amusing and was quickly rejected. Various suggestions were made, and a lengthy discussion ensued, but all proposals were deemed too serious. Finally, a young man, the son of a certain governor of the domain, made a suggestion: 'We are convinced that if we drink the wine His Majesty is offering us, we will become very good at speaking'. This suggestion was immediately approved by all, and the message was sent out. His Majesty's reply came promptly: 'I will gladly fulfill your request'. The final telegram read: 'The Emperor expresses his satisfaction with the attempt and thanks the officials who operated the telegraph on the other side'. While various dignitaries were in the presence of the Emperor, a lively discussion took place about the desirability of introducing telegraph equipment throughout Japan. The majority of those present supported the idea. However, one of them mentioned that, since the telegraph was a Western invention, the telegraph cable might be constantly destroyed or cut by malicious people.[500] *(...) This telegraph remains installed in Miyagi, where His Majesty sometimes practices his*

[500] At the time, the telegraph was something the common people could not understand. They thought it must be "Christian magic" to be able to transmit messages from afar with a wire. Some even believed that the wire was coated with the blood of virgins. Samurai warriors would sometimes pass by with fans held over their heads, thinking it is dirty to go under telegraph cables.

telegraphic skills."[501]

Undeniably, the most magnificent gift was the Bösendorfer piano.[502] Harry Parkes, the British Minister stationed in Japan at the time, reported on the reception and the gifts in letters to his wife:

"*On the 16th they had their audience with the Mikado who sent carriages for them. They had only a small escort of their own but they were allowed to take their band which played them through the town. The Foreign Minister gave them a dinner in the evening at Hama Goten and I was invited to meet them. On the 18th Baron Petz gave the dinner after the Treaty was signed, and the Prime Minister, the Imperial Prince (...), the Foreign Minister, and others were present. I like the Austrian party. The Admiral – Baron Petz – is wonderfully young looking for fifty – no one would take him to be more than forty. It was a great convenience my getting the old legation for them, as they had thus abundance of room – indeed I could not have put up such a party. They provided their own mess but were of course a good deal with me. They brought out some very handsome presents. Among others I think I told you of the piano for the Empress, and a life-length statue of the Emperor of Austria for the Mikado.*" [503]

Images of the replica of *Emperor*, presented to the Empress of Japan (courtesy of Bösendorfer)

[501] Anton Johannes Cornelis Geerts: *Japan in 1870*, Gids, 1871. pp. 47-49.

[502] ペーター・パンツァー: 日本オーストリア関係史、創造社、昭和五十九年, pp. 25-27.; The piano was destroyed five years later in a fire at the imperial palace, but the Viennese factory crafted a faithful copy adorned with 23-carat gold, following contemporary designs. This replica stands as one of the two most expensive pianos ever produced by the Bösendorfer company, currently valued at approximately 290,000 USD.

[503] Letter from Harry Parkes to his wife, 20th October, 1869. F. V. Dickins: *The Life of Sir Harry Parkes*. Vol. II., London, Macmillan 1894., pp. 150-151.

It appears that the various occasions of gift-giving presented a range of amusing situations. In addition to the telegraph presentation, the delivery of the Bösendorfer caused a moment of alarm at the Japanese court. János Xántus documented this episode as follows::

> "*The piano was unpacked, and the conductor of the frigate set it up in the place designated by the Japanese foreign minister and tuned it. After a few days, the Japanese asked our embassy to send a higher-ranking member of the embassy to play a couple of pieces on the wonderful instrument in front of the Empress, because the court had never heard a piano being played before. Baron Eugene Ransonnet, secretary of the embassy, was entrusted with this, and he went to the imperial summer palace, which is located on a landscaped island in the Yedo Bay and is one of the most beautiful noble residences in the whole country. Ransonnet passed through vast rooms in which not a single piece of furniture was visible. Yellow wicker walls, the same carpets, here and there a triangular pillow, but nothing else at all. The piano was set up on one side of the great hall, on the opposite side was a long wicker wall, behind which the entire imperial family squatted on the straw carpet. We also brought a pair of velvet tabourettes to the piano; these were placed on top of the piano and decorated with bouquets of flowers. Ransonnet took one off and wanted to sit on it; the Japanese court officers were horrified by this and warned that he could only play standing in front of the court. Later they wanted him to crouch on the carpet and play like that; but it was after he proved that his hand could not reach the piano (and this was absolutely impossible), that he was eventually allowed to sit on a chair after much fuss and parleying.*"[504]

The pianist in this story is the Austrian Eugen Freiherr von Ransonnet (1838–1926). He was present at all the negotiations, as he spoke fluent French, Italian, and English. Ransonnet took part in this expedition as honorary legation attaché. Throughout the expedition, he conducted natural history research. In Japan, he was tasked with delivering the gifts for the Japanese court and presenting them in an aesthetically pleasing manner. After the treaty with Japan, he returned to Austria alone via America in December 1869 on behalf of Rear Admiral Anton Freiherr von Petz, who had tasked him

[504] Xántus János: *Japánról ipartörténeti szempontból, különös tekintettel a papíriparra*. Vasárnapi Újság, 1874. p. 164. (Translated by the author.) The incident was also reported by a Japanese source,『明治天皇紀』二巻 on page 194. – according to which the piano was presented on 20 October. Translated by the author.

with delivering the Japanese emperor's gifts to Emperor Franz Joseph as quickly as possible.[505] In Japan, the circumstances of Ransonnet's piano concerto were previously only known from the following very brief notes:

> "*On the 16th day of the 9th month (October 20). Course of the concert with a western koto [= stringed instrument], brought by the Austro-Hungarian envoy. A visit [from the Tenno] to the tea house in Yamasato Garden today. A member of the legation of the Austro-Hungarian delegation was appointed to play on this Western koto donated by that country. [The Tenno] listened. The Foreign Minister and the interpreter Koyasu Takashi received the [Austrian] representative and accompanied him [to the tea house]. In the space behind the curtain of the adjoining room [the Tenno] took a seat. The legation delegate played the koto and then returned. The translator interpreted.*"[506]
>
> "*On the 16th day [The Tenno] granted a visit to the Yamasato garden and summoned a representative of the Austro-Hungarian delegation who played the koto well, had him play the Austrian musical instrument donated by that country, and listened.*"[507]

Ransonnet himself also wrote about the introduction of the Bösendorfer piano at the court in his German manuscript.

> "*Before His Majesty entered the building, I played a few pieces, including Chopin's Impromptu in C sharp minor, to test the tuning of the piano and to get to know the tastes of the Japanese. A chromatic scale, however, seemed to cause more astonishment among those present than anything else, as exclamations of surprise escaped the distinguished gentlemen. The piano's tuning remained perfectly clear, even after a year of travel, during which it crossed the equator twice and survived a typhoon! (...) Shortly afterwards, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who had been away for a while, appeared and asked me to begin the concert, as His Majesty had already arrived. The interpreter and the minister sat down next to me on the carpet that I had laid in place of the thick mats to raise the tone of the instrument, and I began to play. The whole scene was both solemn and*

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[505] Peter Pantzer, Nana Miyata: *Klavierkonzert und Geschenke für den jungen japanischen Kaiser im Jahr 1869*, OAG Notizen 12. 2020. p. 20.; https://oag.jp/img/2020/11/Notizen2012_Feature_Ransonnet.pdf (accessed: 2023 dec.)

[506] (Nihon-gaikō-monjo, 2nd book of the 2nd volume). Translated by the author based on the German translation published in: Peter Pantzer, Nana Miyata: *Klavierkonzert und Geschenke für den jungen japanischen Kaiser im Jahr 1869*, OAG Notizen 12. 2020. p. 27.

[507] 『明治天皇紀』二巻 p. 194.; Translated by the author based on the German translation published in: Peter Pantzer, Nana Miyata: *Klavierkonzert und Geschenke für den jungen japanischen Kaiser im Jahr 1869*, OAG Notizen 12. 2020. p. 27.

strange, and I couldn't help feeling a bit self-conscious at first. However, as soon as I felt the keys beneath my fingers and the magnificent instrument responded to the slightest touch, a sense of confidence grew within me. I thought only of the young ruler listening behind the screen, who, by the way, caused far less self-consciousness than the solemn line of proud Japanese dignitaries, their intense, watchful eyes fixed constantly on me. I began with Kuhe's 'Gondola' and the well-known 'Annen-Polka' by Strauss. After I finished the pieces, the Minister of Foreign Affairs sought His Japanese Majesty's instructions and soon returned with a request for me to continue playing. I now played Mendelssohn's 'Auf der Piazetta' and, for the sake of contrast, a Strauss waltz 'Promotionen'. At the Emperor's further request, I finally played Pirkert's Etude for the left hand and a Mazurka by Leschetitzky. This brought the little concert to an end. This time the Minister of Foreign Affairs disappeared for a long time and then brought two objects wrapped in paper. The interpreter handed them to me, interpreting His Excellency's words at the same time. Their main content was that His Majesty had taken great pleasure in my playing, thanked me for my efforts and asked me to accept the gift wrapped in paper as a memento. The gift was presented in the most gracious manner, and I responded with the warmest words, all the more sincere because I was pleasantly surprised by the tortoiseshell cigar box, adorned with precious gold lacquer, which I carefully removed from the wrapping paper after consulting the interpreter. The box is eight inches long, five inches wide and in true Japanese taste, somewhat surprising in the arrangement of the ornaments, but made of the most beautiful material, simple but elegantly executed. (...) The second paper parcel contained a piece of dried fish, in accordance with ancient custom, a symbol which was intended to indicate that the enclosed gift was simply the gift of a poor fisherman – because the Japanese were originally fishermen. (...) It was half past two when I left the imperial palace."[508]

[508] Diözesan-Archiv in Linz, Nachlass Ransonnet; translated by the author.

Decorative details of the Emperor piano (courtesy of Bösendorfer)

In 1870, the Hungarian newspaper Vasárnapi Újság reported on Ransonnet's piano concerto as follows:

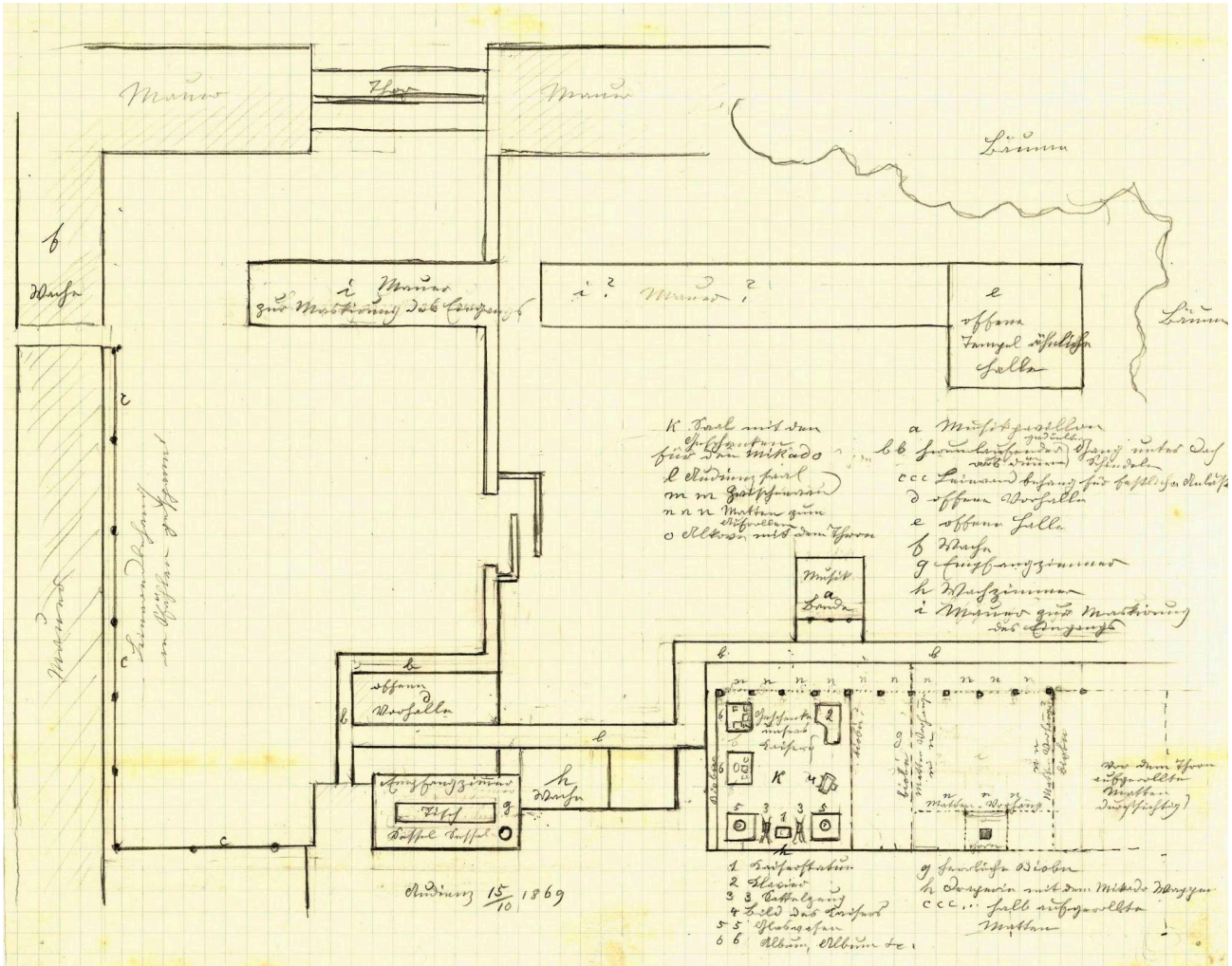
> "*Among the gifts that His Majesty sent to the Emperor of Japan was a magnificent Bösendorfer piano. Baron Ransonnet, who was entrusted with the delivery of the gifts, says interesting things about the emperor's behaviour. The expedition was received by the mikado at a public hearing in the imperial palace, which the Japanese call O-Schiro. The interrogation room is spacious, surrounded on three sides by all kinds of carpeted booths. In one of these niches stands the throne, made of black polished wood with gold straps. The columns of the hall are the same. The walls are painted light blue and the floor is carpeted. The furniture is a work of art. The mikado was sitting on the throne and stood up to receive the salute, when his young face appeared for a few moments, which – when he sits, is always covered by a transparent carpet hung on the ceiling of the throne. To the right and left of the throne stood the bodyguards in fantastic national dress, and*

the ministers and diplomats in European dress. The Japanese "flag gentlemen" wore red velvet suits. It is not proper for a foreigner to see His Imperial Japanese Highness face to face, this is also prohibited by law. However, they don't even let strangers in front of the high court for a private audience. Since the son of the sun is only as frail as the son of other people: he was also troubled by curiosity: what could that great thing be, that is in that strange wooden box? Still, his highness's curiosity about the piano had to be satisfied somehow. Therefore, they emptied an imperial pavilion, taking away the cross walls that divided it into about 60 small rooms. This was an easy job, since the walls, like most things in Japan, were made of paper. Only a partition was left, which divided the room into two sections: one contained Ransonnet and the piano, the other the mikado and the court. At a given signal, R. started the chromatic scale. The Japanese gentlemen liked this immensely, and in this they are similar to the Turks: they also like the tuning the best. The Japanese did not show enough respect for Mendelssohn and Strauss. The Mikado was treated to a musical performance for about two hours, then declared that he was perfectly satisfied. In return, he sent two small packages to the baron: a small stack of sugar cookies and cakes made of rice flour painted in all kinds of colours. One of the packages contained a gold tobacco box with peculiar carvings and enamelling according to Japanese taste, with excellent art. There is a landscape on the cover, and flowers on the sides. And in the other package there was a piece of – smoked fish, which meant that the sender of the gift was a simple fisherman. The Japanese are descended from fishermen. What a peculiar mixture of the Japanese mind this little story is! No stranger can see the face of their emperor, because he is such a great lord. Only the Japanese benefit from this luck, so they are the 'chosen people'. And yet the 'lord of lords' does not fail to reveal his humble origin even when he shines the most. Arrogance and humility at their highest, mixed together. Someone tell me right now: are the Japanese aristocrats or democrats?"[509]

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Austria and Japan, detailed historical information about the concert and reception was published in a

[509] Törs K.: *Egy hangverseny a japáni udvarnál*. Vasárnapi Újság, 30 January 1870. p. 64.; (Translated by the author.) Eugene Ransonnet also mentioned the incident in his own manuscripts, being surprised that instead of the works of Strauss and Mendelssohn, playing piano scales caused the greatest success. Eugen von Ransonnet-Villez: *Reisebilder aus Ostindien, Siam, China und Japan*. Graz, 1912. (manuscript)

Japanese newspaper.[510] This included a comprehensive plan of the imperial court, where the Tennō received the Austro-Hungarian envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, along with written records of Eugene Ransonnet's concert before him. The circumstances of the concert had largely remained unknown in Japan until this level of detail was revealed during the anniversary year. The sketch of the imperial court by Ransonnet shows precisely and authentically everything from the entrance room of Nishi-no-maru of the then Edo Castle, to the audience hall where the foreign delegation was received. It also reveals which gifts from Emperor Franz Joseph were placed where and how. (On May 5, 1873, a fire broke out, destroying almost all the original documents stored in the courtyard. For this reason, Ransonnet's sketch is considered an important document.)



A view of the Imperial Castle drawn by Baron Eugen von Ransonnet of the Austro-Hungarian Imperial Mission who had an audience with Emperor Meiji in 1869; Diözesan-Archiv in Linz, Nachlass Ransonnet

[510] https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXMZO48818260R20C19A8CR8000/ (accessed: 2023 Aug.)

The audience with the Tennō and the presentation of gifts occurred on October 16, 1869. Rear Admiral Anton Freiherr von Petz and First Trade Delegate Karl Ritter von Scherzer documented the event, but Baron von Ransonnet provided one of the most detailed accounts. He was present at the audience and visited the Imperial Palace four times: twice during the gift presentation, at the audience itself, and at the concert featuring the Bösendorfer grand piano. Ransonnet recounted his memories in the typed text of his original handwritten documents.

> *"Long before the appointed hour, the procession of our legation set off, the distance from the legation hotel being great. Our band of musicians and marines marched ahead, followed by the Admiral, the two commanders of the ships: von Wiplinger[511] and von Pitner,[512] General Consul Calice,[513] Legation Secretary Baron Herbert,[514] and my two colleagues, Attaché Baron Trauttenberg[515] and von Bernat,[516] as well as Consular Lieutenant Hengelmüller von Hengervar.[517] The latter were both dressed in Hungarian national costumes, all on horseback. I myself still had work to do in the Oschiro and was awaiting the delegation there. (...) we are invited to take a seat at a large table covered with a colourful square carpet and are served tea, castera (cakes made from biscuit dough, introduced by the Portuguese, hence the name) and rice flour confectionery* [rakugan] *in the form of heraldic flowers* [chrysanthemum] *in various colors. We are also offered long pipes made from bamboo roots with a small metal bowl* [Rau or Rao]. *The pale imperial tea* [= green tea] *also has a strange taste and is more reminiscent of bad meat broth than tea. (...) After some time, the young Prime Minister[518] appears, to whom we are ceremoniously introduced one by one. Meanwhile, in the music pavilion, opposite the audience hall, the court orchestra plays a lengthy piece of festive music that I cannot understand, and in a few moments we find ourselves, led by the minister* [minister on the right, Sanjō Sanetomi]*, in a reverent position before the son of the sun. Two rows of high dignitaries of the empire stand like pillars on the right and left; the first in black and the second in wide scarlet*

[511] Anton Ritter von Wiplinger (1830-1896)
[512] Maximilian von Pitner (1833-1911)
[513] Heinrich Ritter von Calice (1831-1912)
[514] Gabriel Frh. von Herbert-Rathkeal (1832-1889)
[515] Constantin Freiherr von Trauttenberg (1841-1914)
[516] Géza von Bernáth
[517] László Hengelmüller von Hengervár (1845-1917)
[518] Sanjō Sanetomi (1837-1891); court aristocrat (Kuge), leading politician of the Meiji Restoration, 1869-1885 head of government (initially Minister to the Right, from July 1871 head of government).

atlas robes with the traditional black headgear with a long black bow [kanmuri] *curving backwards. Koyasu,*[519] *the court interpreter, whom I already know, wears a small official black lacquer cap* [Eboshi]*, which would fall off immediately if it were not artfully tied with white cords. The tenno, in a wide purple robe* [nōshi] *with red leggings* [hakama] *sits on his gold-studded black throne and behind him in the chiaroscuro of the alcove you can see his bodyguard standing. To my astonishment, I notice that the mats of the alcove, which had been rolled up yesterday, have been lowered so far that the ruler's head is barely visible. Curious to see the new people of western barbarians – the Austro-Hungarian nation – the young monarch bends down before he rises from his throne, returning our bows. Had he not done so, we would have no idea of his, incidentally unattractive, features. Apparently the old court party could not bring themselves to expose the sacred person of the son of the sun to the eyes of the Europeans without further ado, although this was actually required, and so the deliberate mats were lowered a little! Of course, no one from the legation noticed this trick of the court henchmen except me, and the latter probably had no idea that I had found out about it. The Admiral's* [Anton von Petz] *speech was followed by a short reply from the Tenno, the creditives were presented to the Minister* [Minister on the right] *and the ceremony was over."* [520]

After the reception, Petz organized a product exhibition of Austro-Hungarian products in Yokohama on 22 October. Seventy eight Austrian and Hungarian companies and organizations were represented at the exhibition. The Hungarians were present with the following products: the *First Pest Cylinder Mill (Első Pesti Hengermalom Társaság)* with flour, the *Dreher Brewery* with beer, the *Pest Chamber of Commerce (Pesti Kereskedelmi Kamara)* with a wine collection (Fischer, Palugyay wines from Pozsony, Flandorfer and Lenk wines from Sopron, Jalics wines from Pest, Litke's wines from Pécs, Count Zichy's Tokaji wine specialties), and they also brought Hungarian matches. Among the Austrian products were Thonet chairs, Lobmeyer glass items, watches, Wertheim cabinets, fashion items (clothes, toilet soaps, jewellery), candles.[521] In addition to the above, industrial products were also presented. After the product exhibition, the delegation,

[519] Koyasu Takashi (1836-1898); interpreter, founder and first president of the Yomiuri newspaper in 1874.
[520] Diözesan-Archiv in Linz, Nachlass Ransonnet; annotation: Nana Miyata, Peter Pantzer, translation by the author.
[521] Quoted by: Kiss Sándor: *Magyarok, akik szerették Japánt*. Első rész (manuscript) Budapest, Magyar-Japán Gazdasági Klub, 2013., pp. 51-52.; Dr. Scherzer donated the exhibited collection to the local Chamber of Commerce, who, after auctioning it, offered the slightly more than 800 dollars of revenue to the General Hospital of Yokohama on behalf of the Austrian-Hungarian industrialists.

completing its task, left the shores of Japan on the *Donau* and *Erzherzog Friedrich* on 4 November.[522]

The documentation of the expedition in Hungarian was carried out by Ivor Kaas, Manó Cserei, and Géza Bernáth.[523] Bernáth published the travelogue *A keletázsiai expedíció* (1869) in Hungarian, while Scherzer's *Fachmännische Berichte über die österreichisch-ungarische Expedition nach Siam, China und Japan (1868-1871)* (1872), a five-hundred-page account of the expedition, summarized its story in German. Although the primary aim of the expedition was economic, it is the other outcomes – such as the scientific collections and the travelogues – that deserve our attention, as the Hungarian contributors played a significant role, making this expedition a unique chapter in Hungary's modern travel history.[524]

The Austro-Hungarian joint expedition was far from a *smooth sail*, and the reason lay less in the weather than in the political tensions between the Austrian and Hungarian participants. The cooperation, which had initially begun in an exemplary manner, soon deteriorated due to increasingly prominent national differences, to the extent that an investigation was eventually launched. In August 1868, the members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences invited János Xántus, a Hungarian scholar, to join the East Asian Expedition. Initially, he was reluctant to participate, as he doubted the expedition would yield any meaningful benefits for Hungary. However, he was eventually persuaded – appealing to his sense of patriotism – to set aside his reservations and ensure that Hungarian institutions would be represented in the endeavor. Xántus agreed, but only under certain conditions. Despite this agreement, he was not granted a place on the expedition before it officially began. In October 1868, a Hungarian delegate (József Székács) withdrew, and the Hungarian Ministry of Trade offered Xántus the opportunity to take the vacated position – particularly since his expenses had already been factored into the expedition's budget. Nevertheless, the Austrian organizers resisted his inclusion for a considerable time, making various excuses to avoid accepting him. (Vienna also imposed numerous obstacles that hindered both his participation and scientific work). The Hungarian Minister of Public Education remained firm in supporting Xántus, and ultimately, the Austrian organizers relented, allowing him to join the expedition. Xántus thus initially participated in the expedition as a representative of Hungarian scientific

[522] Meiji 2nd year, 10th Month, 1st day, in the old calendar; some sources suggest 14th.
[523] Balázs Dénes (szerk.): *Magyar Utazók Lexikona*. Budapest, Panoráma, 1993. pp. 293-294.
[524] Nagy Miklós Mihály: *Geográfiai hadilobogó alatt*. In: Magyar Tudomány 2001/7. Nagy Miklós Mihály: *Boldog békeidők haditengerészei* (Bp., Kornétás, 2003.)

institutions – the Hungarian National Museum, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and the Hungarian Royal University – at the request of both the Academy and the Hungarian Minister of Public Education. His mission was to enrich the natural history, ethnographic, and library collections of these institutions. In his contract, the Hungarian Minister of Public Education included a specific clause stating that Xántus' participation was strictly scientific in nature and did not extend to the commercial activities of the joint Austro-Hungarian expedition. The Austrian leader of the expedition, Scherzer, asked Xántus to collect items for museums in Vienna (citing Xántus's status as a Monarchy subject, Scherzer required him to collect for Vienna, too).[525] Xántus refused, citing the terms of his contract. Scherzer also suggested that Baron Eugene de Ransonnet could collect artifacts for both Vienna and the Hungarian National Museum, instead of sending a separate Hungarian scientist. However, the Hungarian side argued that the dignity of Hungarian science required the Academy's direct representation in the expedition through Xántus.[526] The ongoing dispute culminated in a persistent effort to secure a Hungarian scientist on the expedition, which had become a matter of national prestige and ensured that Hungary benefited from its scientific work. While the Hungarian Academy of Sciences initially focused on botanical and zoological collecting – fields in which Xántus had already contributed significantly – it was likely the Hungarian Minister of Public Education, Eötvös, and his close circle who pushed to broaden the expedition's scope to include ethnography[527] and applied arts. Xántus himself was not only pessimistic about the project but also had little in common with the Austrians, as evidenced by a draft letter, written in an offended tone while en route to Japan:

> "*Your Excellency, Minister, All the undersigned members of the Austrian-Hungarian Mission to East Asia, as they sign this document, are well aware and deeply feel that they are going beyond the scope of their official mission. However, in spite of this conviction, the undersigned believe that they are all Hungarians first and foremost, and as such have natural and inalienable duties of their own. Which, as patriots, as well as loyal worshippers of law, king, and government, they ought to fulfill under all circumstances, especially in the present*

[525] Letter from János Xántus to Ferenc Pulszky, Hong Kong, June 8, 1869, OSZK Correspondence Fund VIII / 1177.
[526] Xántus János: *Keletázsiai kirándulásom.* 1871. manuscript pp. 1-13. (Néprajzi Múzeum Ethnológiai adattár. EA 1026)
[527] Ethnography, emerging in the mid-to-late 18th century, was closely linked to geography, then considered a historical science. Unlike *Gränzkunde* (natural geography) and *Ländeskunde* (regional geography), ethnography focused on the physical traits, language, customs, and traditions of individual ethnic groups. Its development was also shaped by statistics, political science, human biology, and Linnaean taxonomy applied to the classification of languages and customs.

case, when the authority of law, king, and government is trampled under foot, and Hungary is the object of ridicule and hatred in the eyes of those who receive their pay from our poor country's pennies. Your Excellency will permit us, after these reasons of our writ, to announce briefly how the officers of the two expeditionary ships are in general determined enemies of the Compromise between the two halves of the empire. Besides, the Compromise, and the change of the title of the empire, were never officially made known to the officers of the two ships. The officer corps not only ignored the new position in its entirety, but it happened that at a public luncheon, in front of the Admiral, a senior officer declared how the corps was prepared to fight against the Compromise with arms. It is said that the Admiral reprimanded him in private after the luncheon, but the scandal happened, and happens to a greater or lesser extent every day. Both in public and in private they never speak of anything but Oesterreich, Oesterreichische marine, Oesterreichische Expedition ... – and we are all barely tolerated on board ship, and are regarded as pariahs of the Austrian Empire's province of Hungary, with all the usual derogatory nicknames and taunts."[528]

In October 1869, Xántus – backed by his Hungarian contract – distanced himself from the expedition. (The other Hungarian delegate, Bernáth, also traveled alongside the expedition, specifically during its journey to and from Japan, although the reasons for this remain unclear. He traveled primarily aboard ships operated by the Pacific Steamship Company.) Xántus had planned to publish a three-volume book – partially compiled – entitled "*Utazás Kelet Ázsiában – az osztrák-magyar Keletázsiai Expedíció alkalmából*" (*Travels in East Asia: On the Occasion of the Austro-Hungarian East Asian Expedition*), but it was never published, likely due to his disputes with the Austrians and their lack of confidence in him.[529] Yet Xántus was far from the only stone in the expedition's well-stirred waters. When Ivor Kaas took part in the expedition, he demanded that the Hungarian flag be hoisted on the mast. Since this did not happen – and given that it caused constant tension – Kaas was pushed out of the project and did not return from Japan with the expedition, but instead came home via the Pacific Ocean and the Americas.[530]

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[528] Natural History Museum of Hungary, Science History Collection, bequest of János Xántus. Quoted by Tamás Vásárhelyi, translated by the author. Natural History Bulletin, Vol. 134, No. 8, pp. 359-361.
[529] Xántus János: *Utazás Kelet Ázsiában – az osztrák-magyar Keletázsiai Expedíció alkalmából*. (Tervezet egy részben már kész Keletázsiáról írandó munkára nézve) manuscript (Néprajzi Múzeum Ethnológiai adattár. EA 1025)
[530] Pesti Hírlap, 1879-09-14

It was feared that a mutiny might break out on board due to personal and political differences, so in the final stage of the voyage to South America, Admiral Petz decided that only one Hungarian, Cserei, would be allowed to continue on the *Donau*. It turned out that even as late as 1871, the expedition was still a major source of tension between Austria and Hungary, and lengthy negotiations began over who would pay the additional expenses and how they should be divided between the Foreign Ministry and the Austro-Hungarian Navy. In 1871, the Council of Ministers of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy discussed the supplementary credit requested for the East Asian expedition, whose duration had been extended from the planned one year to two years and four months because of unforeseen delays during the voyage. Earlier, on 19 October 1869, a ministerial conference had decided to allow the mission to proceed despite these setbacks. The additional funding was presented as a necessary consequence of circumstances beyond the planners' control. However, the Hungarian side was reluctant to approve the request and bear its 30% share of the supplementary sum. Prime Minister Count Andrássy emphasized that Hungary was certainly less interested in the expedition than the other half of the empire, and therefore the Hungarian Diet could not be expected to take the lead in covering the supplementary demand of the Cisleithanian delegation.[531]

Overall, owing to the general lack of business interest, Hungarian participation in the expedition was primarily significant from a public and scientific perspective. It offered Hungary a valuable opportunity to present itself on the international stage through a diplomatic mission, emphasizing its independent statehood within the Monarchy.[532] Nevertheless, the success of this endeavor is questionable in retrospect, especially considering that, as late as 1902, a Hungarian envoy to the Monarchy had to inform the Japanese Foreign Ministry that the country's official name was *Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, not Austria*.[533] Despite this, the intellectual value of Hungary's scientific and educational contributions to the expedition is beyond dispute. Upon the expedition's return, the material collected was exhibited in several locations and later formed the foundation of many Hungarian public collections. Xántus' collection was first displayed in the Natural History Collection of the Hungarian National Museum in 1871. Since photography was a major focus of the expedition, its importance warrants brief discussion. Wilhelm Burger was appointed as the professional photographer, and the

[531] Minutes of the Council of Ministers for Common Affairs held in Vienna on April 26, 1871
[532] Józsa Sándor: *Kína és az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia*. 1966., p. 23.
[533] Request for the name of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy from the Monarchy's envoy. Japanese Foreign Affairs Archives, Tokyo, 1902

mission allocated a substantial budget, reflecting the role of photography as a modern form of documentation. This emphasis was driven by Baron Karl von Scherzer, the expedition's scientific and commercial leader, who arranged Burger's appointment. Burger's photographs taken in Japan fall into four main categories: landscapes and architecture, genre scenes, group or individual portraits, and works of art. He used a Voigtländer camera with glass plates of different sizes – larger plates (16×21.4 cm) for landscapes and smaller plates (10.5×7.9 cm) for studio portraits and genre scenes, many taken in rented studios of Japanese photographers in Yokohama. Late in the trip, a shortage of materials led him to experiment with dry plates instead of the wet collodion process. His landscape work includes large-format stereo images of Nagasaki and Kamakura, some preserved at Nagasaki University, though they do not provide true stereo effects. Many studio portraits were later published in business card format in Vienna, and the assistance of Japanese studio owners was crucial for photographing local subjects. Burger's photographs were widely exhibited and published after his return, including an 1870 publication of 170 images and an album of 150 pictures presented to the Vienna Photographic Society. Research also indicates that his collection includes photographs purchased from Japanese studios, sometimes distributed under his name. He additionally documented artworks, often photographing objects he collected as well as street vendors at acquisition sites.[534]

The Austro-Hungarian treaty with Japan, concluded through the expedition, was signed by Emperor Franz Joseph on 8 May 1871, after it had been brought back to Austria-Hungary.[535] The signed document was then to be delivered to Japan by the corvette *Fasana* and presented to the Japanese authorities in the capital by Heinrich Freiherr von Calice. The ship set sail in July 1871, first heading to Shanghai to collect the Austro-Hungarian envoy stationed there, before arriving in Japan on 15 December, having crossed stormy seas. On board was the Transylvanian Saxon ship's doctor, Andreas Breckner (1844–1890), whose diary recounts the delegation's visit to the Japanese Emperor on 12 January 1872:

"We had barely had time to sip some tea from the cup when an officer reported

534

https://etnofoto.neprajz.hu/index.php/2022/09/23/diplomacia-es-fotografia/?fbclid=IwY2xjawOuVCtleHRuA2FlbQIxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzkxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeG3j7PVib_q_AMfflg4Ykwf0dk_0eiodV6B, https://etnofoto.neprajz.hu/index.php/2022/10/07/diplomacia-es-fotografia-ii/?fbclid=IwY2xjawOuU91leHRuA2FlbQIxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzkxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeoTsa0SMknlVc_OYFc7WK9gQdJtjSez (accessed: 2026 Jan.)

535 ペーター・パンツァー『日本オーストリア関係史』創造社、昭和五十九年, p. 36.; (translated by: 竹内精一、芹沢ユリア)

that the Mikado was ready to receive the embassy. A little later, we were standing in front of the throne of the Emperor of Japan. We bowed three times. The music stopped and then the Austrian envoy, Baron Calice, came forward and read his welcome speech in English. In front of us sat the Mikado in a white suit, and a strange, tall headdress. On either side of the throne stood the first ministers, with the other ministers and the lords in the background. The throne room was as simple as the waiting room, which was devoid of all pomp. After Calice had finished his speech, which the interpreter repeated in Japanese, the Baron handed over his credentials and a letter from Emperor Franz Joseph I. The Mikado stood up and gave his imperial reply: he inquired about the Emperor's health, discussed some current issues, and expressed his hope that the Vienna World Exhibition would be a success. The interpreter repeated the answer in German, after which Calice introduced us one by one to His Majesty. Everyone stepped out of the queue, bowed, and then stepped back. That was the end of the reception. As we left, we bowed three more times, just as we had when entering the room, and left the room."[536]

The Széchenyi Expedition (1877-80)

Eight years had passed since the large-scale Austro-Hungarian diplomatic, commercial, and scientific venture before the next voyage was launched, which was financed by a private individual, Béla Széchenyi (1837–1918). Béla Széchenyi was the son of Count István Széchenyi (1791–1860), a prominent Hungarian politician, political theorist, and writer, often regarded as one of Hungary's greatest statesmen. In the mid-1850s, Béla Széchenyi traveled in England, France, and Italy, and in the 1860s, he traveled in America, Canada, and Africa, but his greatest journey was undoubtedly his trip to East Asia in 1877. In December, he set sail from Trieste on the Austrian ship Lloyd Polluce (Pollux) with Austrian cartographer Gustav Kreitner, Hungarian linguist Gábor Bálint, and Hungarian geologist Lajos Lóczy.[537] The plan for the voyage was inspired by Széchenyi's encounters with Rudolf Hochstetter, the scientific leader of an earlier Austrian expedition around the world, the Novara (1857–1859), and with Eduard Suess,

[536] Franz Remmel: *Im Zeichen der Schlange*, Bucharest, 1989; Mitteilungen as Dr. Andreas Breckner's diary. Sibiu. 1900 (published in Hungarian in: *Művelődés*, XLIX évf. 1996. April, p. 6). Translated by the Author.
[537] Halász Gyula: *Öt földrész magyar vándorai*. Győr, 1936., p. 90; Takács Tamás: *Gróf Széchenyi Béla expedíciója*, seminar paper (Gáspár Károli University, Budapest, 2014)

a famous geologist from Vienna. The personal reason behind the trip was the death of his wife in 1872. As a later source notes, "*We understand from the warm recommendation of the scientific results of the journey to East Asia that Béla Széchenyi sought relief from his inconsolable sorrow in this arduous voyage of discovery*".[538] Széchenyi wrote the following in relation to this: "*For years I have lived in retreat, in spiritual and physical desolation. I have sought solace in religion, I have wandered in my melancholy among the followers of spiritualism – all in vain, I could find no solace either here or there. Later, I turned to science (...) I looked to the wondrous works of the great nature, the universe, and sought relief and hope in its (...) mysteries*".[539] The expedition's main objective was to study Inner Asia, but Béla Széchenyi and Gustav Kreitner also made a trip to Japan. First Lieutenant Gustav Kreitner, an officer at the Military Mapping Institute in Vienna, served as the chronicler of the voyage and created the maps accompanying the scientific results. Kreitner later pursued a diplomatic career, and died as the Austro-Hungarian Consul General in Yokohama. Széchenyi and Kreitner arrived at the port of Nagasaki on 21 June 1878. They traveled to Hokkaido and climbed Mount Fuji near Tokyo. It is believed that Béla Széchenyi was the first Hungarian to climb Japan's sacred mountain.[540] Béla Széchenyi spent 100,000 forints on the expedition, which covered 10,000 kilometers across East Asia. It lasted from December 7, 1877, to February 25, 1880. In financial, physical, scientific, and even diplomatic terms, the journey was an unprecedented achievement, earning the undivided recognition of the entire scientific world. Their collection, consisting of seven quintals of natural history, ethnography, and historical materials, filled 19 large chests. The work, which took nearly two decades to complete, was published in three hefty volumes in both Hungarian and German, covering a total of 2,087 pages.[541] It was published in German as *Im fernen Osten* and in Hungarian as *Gróf Széchenyi Béla keleti utazásai* (*The Travels of Count Béla Széchenyi to the East*).[542] The value of the work, written jointly with Lajos Lóczy,[543] is increased by the fact that foreign scholars and experts also contributed to its preparation. As Kreitner was not of Hungarian origin, the book was first published in German and only then in

[538] Halász Gyula: *Öt földrész magyar vándorai*. Győr, 1936., p. 88.
[539] Quoted in: Halász Gyula: *Öt földrész magyar vándorai*. Győr, 1936., p. 90. Translated by the Author.
[540] Balázs Dénes (szerk.): *Magyar Utazók Lexikona*
[541] *Gróf Széchenyi Béla Kelet-ázsiai útjának tudományos eredménye 1877-1880*. I-III.; 1890, Kilián, Budapest
[542] the work was later published in Japanese in 1992: G.クライトナー『東洋紀行1・2・3』、平凡社
[543] Lajos Lóczy, or Ludwig von Lóczy (born 4 November 1849, died 13 May 1920) was a Hungarian geologist, paleontologist, and explorer. He became a professor of geology at the University of Budapest in 1886 and later served as the director of the Hungarian Geological Institute from 1908.

Hungarian. Hungarian readers were able to follow the journey through 32 small booklets published by the Révai Brothers in Budapest, beginning in 1881 and continuing for two and a half years, under the title *Világhírű utasok könyvtára* (Library of World Famous Travellers). The introduction to the first booklet provides the following background about the publication:

> "*While in the neighbouring cultured nations, new and new works, splendidly illustrated, are daily published, and have been widely diffused among all classes of the educated public, in our own peculiar circumstances this important branch of literature has hitherto received but very scanty cultivation. Folk and geographical literature, in particular, has been lying fallow for years. And yet there is great interest among the public in this branch of literature (...) Therefore, when we want to re-establish this important branch of literature in our country, we could hardly have chosen a more interesting and more important work for our country than the description of Count Béla Széchenyi's journey to the East. This book, by the novelty and extraordinary attractiveness of its subject, and by the fact that it reports on the achievements of a Hungarian scientific expedition and constitutes one of the outstanding ornaments and worthy pride of Hungarian scholarship, can count to the greatest extent on the extensive and well-deserved patronage of the Hungarian reading public (...) Count Béla Széchenyi, the worthy son of the greatest Hungarian, could hardly have chosen a more grateful task, and could not have done geography a more important service, than to have organized an exploratory journey through the interior of these countries, interesting both for their inhabitants and for their natural features.*"[544]

The publisher promoted the booklet series primarily with a focus on China and Japan, which was later republished in a new format as a large volume. It is also known that Széchenyi kept a separate diary, but in his will, he ordered it to be burned after his death without being read.[545] Although the diary was destroyed (though it is unclear whether the heirs fully complied with this request), Kreitner's book documented the journey thoroughly, and the scientific results were meticulously compiled in three volumes. Upon returning home, Béla Széchenyi was highly honored: he was elected a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1880, appointed a guardian of the crown in 1901, and

[544] *Világhírű utasok könyvtára*, első füzet, Bp., Révai Testvérek, 1881. Translated by the author.
[545] Bodrogi Tibor: *Messzi népek magyar kutatói.* Bp., Gondolat, 1978.

became an honorary member of the Hungarian Geographical Society in 1904.[546]

The Zrínyi Corvette with a Hungarian ship's doctor in Japan (1890-92)

Széchenyi's voyage was followed by another official expedition of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy: the *Zrínyi* Corvette's voyage to Asia in 1890-92. The purpose of this voyage was to establish new trade agreements and 'carry the flag' of the Monarchy around the world, signaling renewed interest in Asia after two decades of stagnation (since 1869).[547] During the trip, a treaty of friendship, trade, and navigation was signed with Korea on 23 June 1892 in Tokyo. A Hungarian ship's doctor, Ferenc Gáspár – who visited Japan several times between 1890 and 1900 – was on board, along with Hungarian second-class engine officer Lajos Krecsmári, born in Szentes, who also served on the *Zrínyi*.[548] Gáspár made a name for himself as a naval surgeon (reaching the rank of colonel) and as a travel writer. He joined the Navy in the late 1880s, where he served as a ship's doctor and traveled the world. His interests went beyond the scope of his profession; he was deeply curious about understanding the world of the seas. In his books, he wrote about his experiences in the navy, and the life of sailors in a unique style, greatly contributing to the geographic knowledge of the Hungarian people. He wrote the following about the start of the expedition:

> "*We once received word from above, from the main port of war, that the Zrínyi corvette was being prepared for a long expedition in early spring, during which she would visit Arabia, Ceylon, the Indies, the coast of China, the coastal cities of China's main rivers, the "Closed Country" (Korea), Japan, etc... To us, poor "galley slaves", as we called ourselves, this news made just such an impression as the abandoned orphan may feel when he sees with envy the happiness of another. For it is well known that, of all the voyages which our navy ships make, those to East Asia are the most interesting, and therefore the most desirable. No wonder,*

[546] Takács Tamás: *Gróf Széchenyi Béla expedíciója*, seminar paper (Gáspár Károli University, Budapest, 2014)
[547] Józsa Sándor: *Kína és az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia*. Bp., Akadémiai Kiadó, 1966., pp. 57-58.; Bálint Varga's excellent study shows that after the Compromise in 1869 a flag, consisting of three bands was designed to represent the dual state: the upper band of the flag was red, the middle band white, and the lower band divided red and green, with a red-white-red stylized coat of arms under a crown on the left side and the Hungarian small coat of arms on the right side. However, this flag was only used abroad and only to a limited extent. This was the double flag under which the merchant ships of the Austro-Hungarian Empire sailed in international waters and which was also flown on the buildings of Austro-Hungarian consulates. Warships, on the other hand, sailed under the red-white-red flag, the dynasty colours, introduced in 1784. Varga Bálint: *Egy össze nem álló kép mozaikjai – Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia dualitásának kortárs reprezentációja* IN: AETAS 32. 2017. 4., pp. 9-15.
[548] *Egy szentesi fiú Chinában*. Szentesi Lap, XX. évf., 136. szám, 1890. nov. 16., p. 3.

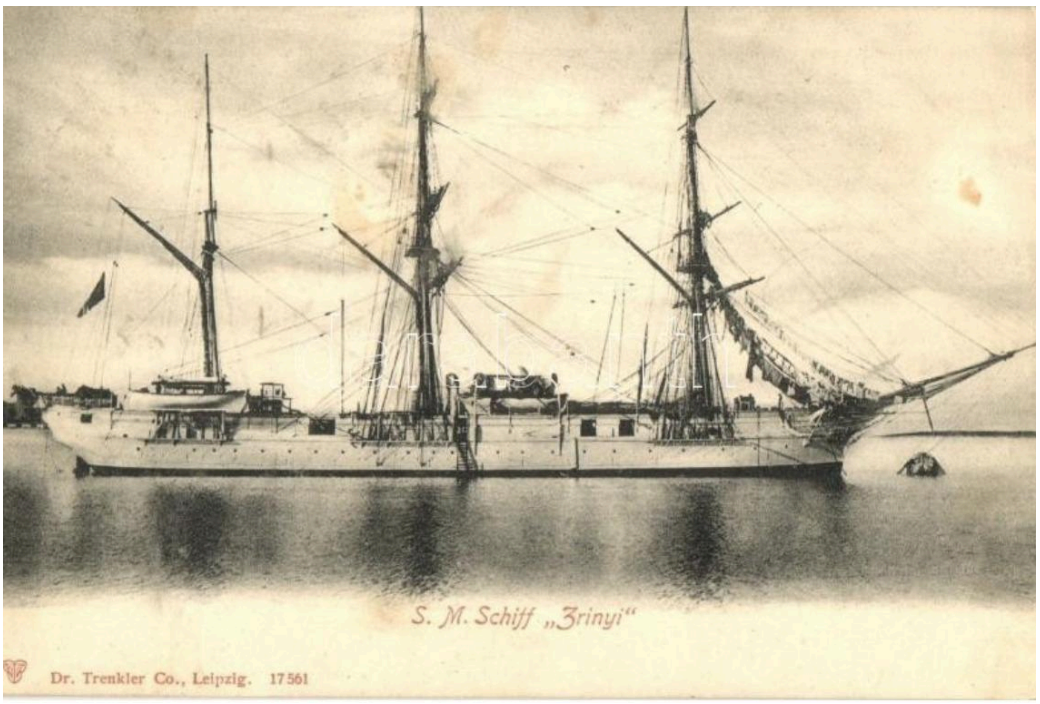
therefore, that we had an involuntary thought and desire to board the Zrínyi (...) We had long forgotten the Zrínyi, China, Japan, and the vain hopes of life on land, when one evening, after a telegram to the commander of the ship, the commander called me to him and informed me that I must take the nearest mail boat to Poland, having been assigned to the Zrínyi as her chief surgeon! (...) I saw my childhood dreams, my youthful ideals, suddenly realised in these few words of the commander."[549]

Lajos Krecsmári's description gives us some idea of what it must have been like to serve on *Zrínyi* from the point of view of a machine operator. This is revealed in his correspondence with his family:

"*In your last letter, you asked me what I do, what my salary is, and what I eat. As a machine operator, I have enough to do. If we sail by steam, I am at the engine or boilers; if by sail, I take deck duty alongside the deck crew after forty-eight hours, once the boilers are shut down. My Lenung*[550] *for a month is one lira in gold, here in China it is six dollars; a dollar in our money is 1 forint 82 krones. When I reach the port and have done the necessary shopping for a month, I have very little left. We eat rice, canned beans, and potatoes all the way, which I will not taste, for they do not fit human consumption. Sea salted, stinking beef. In port we get fresh meat and bread.*"[551]

The expedition returned home in 1892. There is also an Austrian report on the expedition: *Freiherr Jerolim Benko von Boinik: Die Reise S.M. Schiffes "Zrinyi" nach Ost-Asien, 1890-1891: verfasst auf Befehl des K. und K. Reichs-Kriegsministerium, Marine-Section, unter Zugrundelegung der Berichte des K. und K. Schiffscommandos, und ergänzt nach Consularberichten und anderen authentischen Quellen, Volumes 1-2*.

[549] Gáspár Ferenc: *A Föld körül IV.* Bp., Singer és Wolfner, 1907. pp. 138-140.
[550] pay in German (Lehnung)
[551] *Levél Chinából*, Szentesi Lap, XXI. évf., 1. szám, 1891 jan. 1., p. 5. Translated by the author.



SMS Zrínyi corvette, darabanth.com

Franz Ferdinand's journey to Japan (1892-93)

In the same year, 1892, the heir to the throne Franz Ferdinand Habsburg set off on a circumnavigation of the globe. The purpose of the journey was to travel around the world with the future monarch, but it could also serve to improve Ferdinand's health, especially his mental and psychological condition. His biographer Olivér Eöttevényi wrote the following about the reasons for the trip:

> "*When his symptoms seemed to have calmed him down, he went to see the famous internist professor at the University of Vienna, Schrötter, who, after a thorough examination, told him frankly what was wrong with him and that if he wanted to get well, he would have to get out of his normal and professional lifestyle as soon as possible. He must enjoy absolute peace and quiet, clean air and live on the diet he had been prescribed. Before this serious diagnosis, both he and the relevant court authorities believed that a major sea voyage would bring about his recovery. (...) And in order that the voyage should not be conspicuous to the general public, the reason for the voyage was publicly given as being that the Archduke was going on a study trip to broaden his knowledge.*"[552]

[552] Quoted in: Nagy Miklós Mihály: *Boldog békeidők haditengerészei – A k.u.k. hadiflotta utazástörténete*, Bp., Kornétás 2003., p. 279. Translated by the author.

The delegation was entrusted with scientific and diplomatic tasks, such as delivering the friendship and trade treaty to Korea and conducting scientific measurements. Among the Hungarian officers on the 1892-1893 voyage were Ferenc Reményi (1868-1940), a conscript lieutenant and military journalist; Gyula Prónay of Tótpróna and Blatnyicza (1860-1933),[553] a lieutenant of the 11th Hussars Regiment and Imperial and Royal Chamberlain, who served on the Crown Prince's immediate staff; Jenő Mallinárich (?-?), an Ensign; and István Pelczéder (?-?) naval officer. The expedition set sail from Trieste on 15 December 1892 aboard the *Kaiserin Elisabeth (Empress Elisabeth)*, the most modern warship in the joint fleet. After passing through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea, they visited Ceylon (now: Sri Lanka), Bombay, Singapore, Java, Sydney, New Caledonia, the Solomon Islands, New Guinea, the Aru Islands, Borneo, Bangkok, and Hong Kong, before continuing to Japan. They arrived in Nagasaki on 2 August 1893, where they were received with great splendour. This is what Reményi wrote about their arrival in Nagasaki:

> "*The Archduke appeared in Nippon in his official capacity as the scion and representative of our Imperial House. As such, he was the honoured guest of Mutsuhito, the Emperor of Nippon (...). He placed a special warship at his disposal, and on land he provided special trains and ceremonial carriages, and wherever he appeared he was accorded a truly royal welcome.*"[554]

The following is what Francis Ferdinand himself wrote in his diary about the reception at Tokyo Station:

> "*At Shimbashi Station, which was completely locked down so that only official persons had access, I was greeted by the Imperial prince Arisugawa by the order of the Emperor. He is the uncle of the Mikado (...) and had been the victorious commander-in-chief of the Imperial troops in the civil war of 1868 and the Satsuma rebellion in 1877 and is currently the army commander-in-chief. All ministers and court dignitaries were present too at the reception. Baroness Biegeleben, the sister of our ambassador, and Mrs. von Kreitner handed me fragrant bouquets of flowers in the name of the Austro-Hungarian colony. After the usual introduction of both entourages and the highest dignitaries I entered a court gala carriage together with the prince while an honor company presented arms to the sound of*

[553] Julius Prónay von Tót-Próna und Blatnicza

[554] Reményi Ferenc: *Képek Ferenc Ferdinánd világutazásából.* Földrajzi Közlemények, 1894., pp. 191-192. Translated by the author.

the Japanese general march. We drove through a cordon of soldiers to the Imperial pleasure palace Ohama goten, escorted by a squadron of guard lancers. The palace is situated quite far from the city at the sea shore."[555]

Reception of Franz Ferdinand at Shimbasi Station in Tokyo on 17 August 1893; 5代目 歌川国政 1893年[556]

István Pelczéder, a Hungarian naval officer, recounted the following story to a contemporary newspaper. While in Japan, a luncheon was held on board the ship in Yokohama in honor of the Japanese naval officers. A Japanese vice admiral and ten high-ranking officers attended. To everyone's surprise, the vice admiral asked the commander of the *Kaiserin Elizabeth* to have a Hungarian folk song played. The band performed several folk tunes, after which the vice admiral inquired whether there were any Hungarian boys among the sailors. When told there were, the Japanese vice admiral – known for his fondness for Hungary – expressed his wish to see the Hungarian *csárdás*.[557] At his request, the Hungarian young sailors on board first danced the slow part of the *csárdás*, then launched into such a lively performance that the vice admiral and his officers broke into repeated applause. At the admiral's further request, the boys also sang several Hungarian songs, which deeply moved the Japanese officers, who

[555] http://www.franzferdinandsworld.com/miyanoshita-tokyo-yokohama-17-august-1893/ (accessed: 2024 Oct.)
[556] https://heritage-aj.com/2022/05/opa-fan-bro-22-0521-r33.jpg (accessed: 2024 Oct.)
[557] *Csárdás* is a traditional Hungarian folk dance characterized by a two-part tempo. It typically begins slowly and gracefully, and then transitions into a fast, lively section. The dance is often performed by couples and features spirited footwork, spins, and dramatic gestures. Csárdás is closely tied to Hungarian music and culture and is frequently accompanied by folk instruments such as the violin, cimbalom, and double bass.

expressed their appreciation again and again. To mark the occasion, the vice admiral sent each of the young men a bottle of champagne.[558] When leaving Japan on August 24, 1893, Franz Ferdinand bid farewell to the *Kaiserin Elisabeth* in Yokohama during a ceremonial parade (the Kaiserin Elisabeth stayed in Japan a few more days before continuing to Korea to conclude a bilateral treaty, so Franz Ferdinand had to change ships upon leaving Japan). Deeply moved and homesick, he saw the ship and its crew as a comforting "home abroad". On August 25, 1893, Franz Ferdinand and his entourage transferred to the *Empress of China*, traveling as private passengers without special privileges, which limited his freedom compared to the *Kaiserin Elisabeth*. Franz Ferdinand then traveled to North America, touring Canada and the United States before returning to Europe on October 10. Ferdinand's book *A Tagebuch meiner Reise um die Erde (Diary of my journey around the world)* was published in Vienna in 1895. The diary has still not been published in Hungarian. The lack of a translation at the time may have been due to the Archduke's well-known antipathy towards Hungarians – perhaps this was a Hungarian way of protesting against him. Ferenc Reményi's summary was first published in April 1894 in *Földrajzi Közlemények*, under the title *Képek Ferencz Ferdinánd főherczeg világutazásából (Images from Archduke Franz Ferdinand's World Tour)*. His articles later appeared in Vasárnapi Újság between 1894 and 1895. After the Archduke's return, a grand exhibition was held at the Belvedere Palace in Vienna, showcasing the collection and scientific results of his world tour. (One hundred and twenty years later, at the Weltmuseum in Vienna, an exhibition titled *Franz is here!* about Franz Ferdinand's world tour was on display from May to September 2014.)

Sissi Humel-Hammer notes that Franz Ferdinand's world tour of 1892–93 was both a prestige-driven 'princely journey' and a personal passion, combining education, cultural broadening, and pleasure. In the late 19th century, princes' travels were primarily prestige events serving politics, diplomacy, and dynastic representation rather than leisure. While personal interests sometimes played a role, these journeys were essentially state acts. As a young heir, Archduke Franz Ferdinand fit this model but planned a Grand Tour that went beyond typical princely travel, aiming for extraordinary and unconventional experiences. Influenced by his father Karl Ludwig's interests in art, science, and travel, and despite a hereditary susceptibility to lung disease,[559] the young

[558] Budapesti Hírlap, 1894-08-31 / 240. szám p. 10.

[559] A key point of debate in the research literature on Franz Ferdinand's journey is the motivation behind it, particularly whether his health played a role. Although genetically predisposed to tuberculosis, he showed no severe symptoms at the start of the tour in 1892. Contemporary letters and analyses suggest that, despite rumors of poor health, the trip took

archduke undertook the trip with the approval of Emperor Franz Joseph, partly encouraged by Empress Elisabeth. The journey required extensive planning, including securing finances, choosing companions, arranging ships, accommodations, hunting permits (though no hunting took place in Japan), and military visits. While in Japan, his visit was tightly scheduled and heavily monitored for security, though Franz Ferdinand occasionally managed to take unsupervised excursions. A notable escape was later recalled by Franz in his diaries:

> "*In the afternoon I wanted to be back in Tokyo and, in order to avoid the watchful eyes of the police, I let Clam and Pronay travel directly to the capital, where they were received in the most ceremonial manner by a crowd of a thousand people and the corresponding deployment of police officers, while I got off with Siebold at the penultimate station and hurried to Tokyo using rickshaws. The maneuver was successful; we were able to move about completely unhindered for a few hours and have dinner in a restaurant in the beautiful Ueno Park.*"[560]

Franz Ferdinand with his entourage in Japanese costume at the Fujiya Hotel (Weltmuseum)

Sissi Humel-Hammer highlights that Franz Ferdinand's Grand Tour was unprecedented for a European heir, both in scope and duration. While previous Habsburgs, such as Emperor Franz Joseph and Crown Prince Rudolf, had traveled abroad for political, educational, or leisure purposes, none matched the extensive itinerary or global reach of Franz Ferdinand's journey. He was likely the only Habsburg to circumnavigate the world

place before his illness became serious, indicating that the journey was feasible despite potential medical concerns. See: Sissi Humel-Hammer: *Ein Erzherzog auf Grand Tour Quellen zur Weltreise Franz Ferdinands von Österreich-Este*. Diplomarbeit, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz. 2021., pp. 24-25.

[560] Franz Ferdinand: *Tagebuch*, Zweiter Band, p. 412. Translated by the author.

before the monarchy's collapse. The only journey comparable to Franz Ferdinand's world tour was that of Russian heir Nicholas (later Tsar Nicholas II) in 1890, which also aimed to be an educational princely journey. However, it ended prematurely after nine months due to an assassination attempt in Japan. This exposed Franz Ferdinand to heightened security measures for high-profile visitors during his own visit. In Japan, Franz Ferdinand observed Japanese culture closely, noting clothing, customs, architecture, and social behavior, often contrasting them with European norms. He participated in local practices, such as sleeping on futons and *getting a tattoo*,[561] and collected souvenirs like Kyoto silk. Military installations and garrisons also drew his professional interest. Franz Ferdinand's diary, originally intended for private circulation among family and friends, documented his detailed observations, personal reflections, and moral judgments. He was critical of Europeanization in Japan, praised modernization selectively, and often expressed homesickness and patriotism. The diary contained candid – and sometimes sexist or ethnically prejudiced – remarks, reflecting both contemporary attitudes and his personal temperament. Franz Ferdinand criticized the widely praised image of Japanese women, arguing that their charm and graceful appearance were exaggerated and seemed too "doll-like" from a European perspective. He disapproved of a dance performance by 10- to 18-year-old girls in a famous Nagasaki tea house, which other travelers had admired, expressing a "reluctance against the display of children". These reactions reveal his strict moral standards and tendency to judge local customs through a European lens. After returning, Franz Ferdinand's diary was revised under the guidance of his teacher before publication (the edition was necessary because Franz Ferdinand's unfiltered views could be harsh and diplomatically sensitive).[562] Franz Ferdinand was pleased with the revisions to his travel notes, appreciating that they balanced accuracy and embellishment while adding historical, economic, ethnographic, political, and natural history context. The work highlighted recurring motifs of patriotism, homesickness, and cultural comparison, while also offering insights into the archduke's moods, perspectives, and experiences during

[561] "*Since we were now indulging in local customs, I also subjected myself to a tattoo, from which, after a rather painful four-hour procedure that required no fewer than 52,000 stitches, a dragon emerged on my left arm – a joke that I will probably regret because of its indelible marks.*" Franz Ferdinand: *Tagebuch*, Zweiter Band, p. 382. Translated by the author. Franz Ferdinand's tattoo became his most lasting Japanese souvenir, recorded in his diary, though its bill appears only in the estates of Prónay and Wurmbrand, not his own. (He may have been inspired by Britain's Prince Albert, who had his arm tattooed in the Japanese style in 1881. See: Hugh Cortazzi: *Collected Writings of Sir Hugh Cortazzi*, London. p. 108.)

[562] The official publication of Franz Ferdinand's travel diary was delayed because the Austro-Hungarian Navy also planned to publish an account of the SMS Kaiserin Elisabeth voyage, abandoning the project only after lengthy negotiations. It is also a fact that the diary's high price restricted its circulation among the public.

the journey (the original documents are preserved at Artstetten Castle and comprise more than 2,000 pages of notes).[563]

Japanese souvenir sellers on board the Kaiserin Elizabeth (private collection)

Japanese expeditions to the West, and the Iwakura mission

After examining the expeditions of the Monarchy, let's now turn to the Japanese missions to Europe, which began in the second half of the 19th century. The Japanese had to recognize that they were behind the West in technological development. They had no choice but to study the military technology and institutional systems of the great powers if they wanted to compete. To this end, a series of official and unofficial missions were launched from 1860 onwards, following the central authorities' and high-ranking officials' assessment of the importance of learning from the West. This enabled selected individuals to embark on expeditions to America and Europe, where they could study Western countries and their political, educational, and military institutions. From the mid-19th century, the shogun, head of the central government, organized seven study trips of

[563] Sissi Humel-Hammer: *Ein Erzherzog auf Grand Tour Quellen zur Weltreise Franz Ferdinands von Österreich-Este*. Diplomarbeit, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz. 2021., pp. 2-100.

varying sizes to America and Europe, allowing around 300 young people in total to study in the West.[564]

The largest official Japanese delegation to the West departed after the Meiji regime change. On December 23, 1871, the Japanese government sent a diplomatic mission of 48 people to America and Europe, accompanied by 59 young students. The mission was spearheaded by Tomomi Iwakura, *Udaijin* (Minister of the Right), and comprised a diverse group including other ministers and officials. (It was unprecedented that so many key members[565] of the cabinet would be away on such a lengthy overseas trip, particularly so soon after the Meiji government had been formed.) The Iwakura Mission was much larger in scale than those sent by the previous feudal central government, but one of its goals remained the same: to learn from the West. The delegation returned to Japan on December 13, 1873. It is not widely known that it was Guido Herman Friedrich Verbeck (1830–98), a Dutch missionary and advisor to the new Meiji government, who suggested in 1869 sending an embassy abroad to Europe and America, and that the records of the mission's inspection tour should be compiled and published. The official record of the journey was issued with the authority of the Dajōkan (太政官).[566] Verbeck further advised on how to write the official report, summarizing his suggestions in 10 key points: (1) No member of the mission should personally publish their own account of the experience. (2) Every member should record what they read, heard, and saw, including the date, place, and their name, so the notes can later be compiled. (3) Any documents, tables, or maps that may be useful to the nation should not be lost. (4) Members should consistently submit their notes and documents to the official in charge during the inspection tour and upon return. (5) After the mission, the government should appoint an experienced historiographer to compile the records, organized chronologically. Each chapter should cover a single topic, supplemented with documents and tables. (6) The historiographer should have the authority to summon and question anyone who has contributed notes or documents. (7) The historiographer should be assisted by translators and painters. (8) The prose should be elegant yet simple, and the published work should be sold at an affordable

[564] *The Cambridge History of Japan*: Vol. 5. The Nineteenth Century. Cambridge, 1989.; pp. 459-460.

[565] Sanetomi Sanjo (court noble, Grand Minister of State – today's Prime Minister), Takayoshi Kido (Councillor of State), Toshimichi Okubo (Minister of Finance – he held the de facto power of a prime minister), Hirobumi Itō (Senior Councillor of Public Works). Izumi Saburo: *The Origins of Japan's Modernization: The Iwakura Mission.* In: Journal of Japanese Trade and Industry. 2002 Sept/Oct. p. 46. Izumi suggests that the fact that core members of the government were away for such a long time should be seen as more *reckless than brave*.

[566] The Dajōkan was the central government body during the early Meiji period in Japan, functioning as the highest executive agency. It was responsible for overseeing the administration of the empire and was equivalent to the central government or cabinet before the establishment of the modern cabinet system.

price to ensure widespread readership. (9) Irrelevant official matters should be excluded from the publication. A mission executive should edit the draft before publication. (10) The tour should inspect the following: architecture, cities and villages, shops, famous landscapes, mountains and rivers, climate, weather, roads, transportation, manners, customs, rites and festivals, entertainment, food, plants, exhibitions, street scenes (day and night), relationships, children's conditions, accounting, education, religion, inventions, media, paintings, libraries, imperial audiences, official and personal letters, official banquets, finance, agriculture, industry, welfare, hospitals, national character, the results of religious oppression, poverty, government structure, laws, municipal government, prisons, the military, fortifications, ports, and more.[567]

The Iwakura Mission's route in Europe (Source: nippon.com)[568]

While the primary aim of the mission was to renegotiate the unequal treaties with Japan,[569] it was equally important for the delegation to observe the institutions of the West. In this context, Hirobumi Itō, a member of the delegation, had a special task: to identify highly

[567] Translation based on Shigekazu Kondo's translation. Source: 田中彰『日本近代思想大系(1)開国』岩波書店 1991. p. 368.; Shigekazu Kondo: *Kume Kunitake as a historiographer.* In: Ian Nish (ed.): The Iwakura Mission in America and Europe – A New Assessment, 1998., pp. 120-121.

[568] Source: https://www.nippon.com/en/japan-topics/g00680/the-iwakura-mission-japan%E2%80%99s-1871-voyage-to-discover-the-western-world.html (accessed: 2025 Apr.) The American route of the Iwakura Mission can be traced through an excellent online exhibition created by the Digital Museum of the History of Japanese in New York, commemorating the 150th anniversary of the delegation's visit. See: https://www.historyofjapaneseinny.org/special-exhibit/ (accessed: 2025 Apr.)

[569] Although the delegation sought to renegotiate the unequal treaties imposed on Japan, it did not have the authority to conduct formal negotiations. Western governments largely refused to discuss treaty revision, arguing that Japan was not yet sufficiently modernized.

qualified Western professionals who could be recruited to Japan to contribute their expertise to the modernization process (later referred to as 'oyatoi gaikokujin' – foreign employees – in Japanese).[570] As a result of the mission, Japan's leaders realized that the gap between the industrialized West and technologically backward Japan was not insurmountable. They also recognized the need to reorganize Japan by modernizing its military technology to match Western standards while simultaneously transforming its internal laws and institutions. In a world dominated by imperial powers, strengthening Japan became an urgent priority. This entailed developing industry and trade to build national prosperity and enhancing military capabilities accordingly. Recognizing that modern warfare relied heavily on technology and industrial strength, the mission's leaders returned with a clear vision for securing Japan's independence. As a result, they actively advanced modernization efforts, turning previously vague ambitions into concrete plans shaped by their overseas observations.[571] Saburo Izumi, the Chairman of the Iwakura Society argues that one of the key outcomes of the Iwakura study tour was a proposal by Takayoshi Kido and Toshimichi Ōkubo to establish a constitutional monarchy under the Emperor. This is further supported by a paper discussing Shuzo Aoki's early life. Aoki, who served as the interpreter for the Iwakura Mission, is noted for proposing a governmental system suited to Japan's specific circumstances. He advocated for a constitutional monarchy modeled on Austria-Hungary or Prussia, arguing that the parliamentary monarchies of Britain, France, and Belgium were unsuitable for Japan, and that a return to an absolute monarchy was equally inappropriate.[572]

The delegation toured Great Britain over the course of nearly four months (August 17 – December 16, 1872), following a clockwise route from London through industrial centers like Manchester and Birmingham, up to Scotland, and back. While their stay in Britain was lengthy, direct political engagement with the British government was limited. After returning to Japan in 1873, Kunitake Kume dedicated himself to compiling the official

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[570] 'Oyatoi gaikokujin' 御雇い外国人 (between 1876 and 1895, the Japanese government employed about 4,000 well-paid foreign consultants). It should be noted that the highly qualified, top-ranking professionals whom Itō approached were generally unwilling to go to Japan, so he had to settle for less qualified applicants. Interestingly, Itō met Franz Liszt, who was then 60 years old, at a concert in Paris and invited him to teach in Japan, but nothing came of it. Franz Liszt was well known in Meiji Japan, and his works were performed on many occasions. For more information, see: 木下由香「日本におけるフランツ・リストの受容:明治・大正期の音楽雑誌を中心に」In:『仁愛女子短期大学研究紀要』44, 2012, pp. 57-70.; Further reading on foreign employees: Kristin Meißner: *Strategische Experten Die imperialpolitische Rolle von ausländischen Beratern in Meiji-Japan (1868–1912)*. Campus Verlag Frankfurt/New York, 2018.

[571] Izumi Saburo: *The Origins of Japan's Modernization: The Iwakura Mission.* In: Journal of Japanese Trade and Industry. 2002 Sept/Oct. p. 48.

[572] ニクラス・ザルム・ライファーシャイト(訳 前田智成): 特集 オーストリアの歴史と現在,「青木周蔵 ― 日本・ドイツ・オーストリアの絆」, Sophia University, 上智ヨーロッパ研究 / 上智大学ヨーロッパ研究所 編 (2), 1-14, 2009 東京 : 上智大学

account of the Iwakura Mission. The result was the Tokumei Zenken Taishi Beiō Kairan Jikki, *A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary's Journey of Observation Through the United States of America and Europe*, published in 1878.[573] Spanning five volumes, this work was exceptional in both scale and scope, offering a thorough and wide-ranging account of the mission's encounters with the West – particularly its observations in Britain. As one the longest and most detailed volume focused entirely on the United Kingdom – especially London – it deserves special mention. The Iwakura Mission's investigations in Britain focused on three key areas: political institutions, economic systems, and education. It closely studied the workings of constitutional monarchy and Parliament; examined industry, transport, finance, and taxation to understand Britain's economic success; and assessed education, military training, and museums as parts of modern industrial society.[574] According to Andrew Cobbing, Kume's narrative progresses from broad overviews to increasingly detailed descriptions, blending empirical observation with historical and institutional analysis. His depiction of Victorian London is nearly encyclopedic, covering everything from the city's physical layout to its public institutions, trade statistics, hospitals, and exhibitions. The *Kairan Jikki* thus became a valuable reference for Meiji-era readers seeking comprehensive knowledge of the modern West. Although Kume lacked formal training in Western studies, he was able to draw on a rich body of prior Japanese research, including documentation from earlier missions and reports. By the time the Iwakura Mission arrived in 1872, over a hundred Japanese students were already studying in Britain – most of them in London – further enriching the pool of information that Kume could access and synthesize. Kume's descriptive style was also shaped by his exposure to European literature, particularly the works of Charles Dickens. His detailed, panoramic portrayal of London – shifting from grand structures to street-level scenes – mirrors the narrative techniques found in Dickens's novels, which often moved between social classes and urban spaces to capture the complexity of Victorian life. This influence helped Kume craft a vivid and multifaceted image of Britain that resonated with Japanese readers navigating their own country's modernization.[575]

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[573] 久米邦武『特命全権大使米欧回覧実記. 4』、東京、岩波書店、1980.

[574] Breen, John M. and Checkland, Oliver and Cobbing, Andrew and Ohta, Akiko: *The Iwakura Mission in Britain, 1872* (March 1998). LSE STICERD Research Paper No. IS349, Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=1162029. p. 14.

[575] Breen, John M. and Checkland, Oliver and Cobbing, Andrew and Ohta, Akiko: *The Iwakura Mission in Britain, 1872* (March 1998). LSE STICERD Research Paper No. IS349, Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=1162029. pp. 5-11.

Germany – though visited for only four weeks in total – received considerable attention in the mission's reports due to its rising military, economic, and scientific strength. The importance of the German visit is evident in the official records: while the United States and Great Britain each received twenty chapters in Kunitake Kume's account, Germany ranked third with ten chapters – an amount that aligns well with the time spent there. These visits were spread across three separate periods between March and May in 1873. Stopping in Germany was initially planned as a brief transit stop, but the stay was extended to nearly four weeks – still only half the time spent in France, but considerably longer than the visits to Russia or Austria. The newly unified German Empire took considerable care in hosting the mission, including multiple audiences with Emperor Wilhelm I. Despite this hospitality, Kume offered critical observations of German society. He noted the persistence of feudal structures, with the nobility clinging to land-based privilege while indulging in French tastes. Only after the 1871 victory, he suggested, did Germany's elite begin cultivating a distinct cultural identity. Kume found Berlin less refined than London or Paris, and commented on the rougher manners of ordinary Germans – remarks he presented with a degree of frankness. [576] As noted earlier, of the *Kairan Jikki*'s 100 chapters, the United States and Britain received the most attention, with 20 chapters each. (Saburo Izumi, the Chairman of the Iwakura Society, emphasizes that the mission spent 200 days in the United States and 210 in Europe, including 120 in Britain and 60 in Paris.)[577] Germany followed with 10, then France (9), Italy (7), Russia (5), and Austria, Belgium, and the Netherlands (3 each). Sweden and Switzerland are covered in 2 chapters, while Denmark, Spain, and Portugal each received 1. The work includes 5 general chapters on Europe and 2 on the 1873 Vienna World Exhibition.[578]

[576] Andrea Giuliani: *The Japanese Iwakura Mission in Britain and Germany.* Manuscript, Academia.edu https://www.academia.edu/35030419/The_Japanese_Iwakura_Mission_in_Britain_and_Germany (accessed: 2025 Apr.) pp. 5-6.; Ulrich Wattenberg: *Germany 7–28 March, 15–17 April, 1–8 May 1873.* In: Ian Nish (ed.): The Iwakura Mission in America and Europe – A New Assessment, 1998., pp. 71-79.

[577] Izumi Saburo: *The Origins of Japan's Modernization: The Iwakura Mission.* In: Journal of Japanese Trade and Industry. 2002 Sept/Oct. p. 47.

[578] Ulrich Wattenberg: *Germany 7–28 March, 15–17 April, 1–8 May 1873.* In: Ian Nish (ed.): The Iwakura Mission in America and Europe – A New Assessment, 1998., p. 72.

Meiji-era map of Europe from c. 1890, with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at the center (geographicus.com)

When the Iwakura Mission visited Vienna during the 1873 Vienna World's Fair, they had planned to visit the Hungarian government in Pest on June 15. Yet, their plans were thwarted when they received a telegram from the Hungarian capital stating that their visit would *face obstacles*.[579] As noted by Masanori Kondō, the first extensive description of Hungary was published in connection with the Iwakura Mission's visit. Since the delegation's visit to Pest failed due to a lack of receptiveness from the Hungarian side, the brief section on Hungary, about ten pages long, is not based on firsthand experiences. Kume relied on the writings of a *Mr. Moreshī*, whom the English translators of the Japanese work identified as the Hungarian royal adviser and economist István Morócz (1816-1881). We do not know how Kume gained access to the Hungarian scholar's work, but several of Morócz's writings were published in German and French in the 1860s. In his account, Kume essentially depicted Hungary as a semi-civilized, gradually modernizing country, drawing comparisons in some respects to Japan, which had also been slow to modernize. Regarding the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, he wrote:

> "*By nature, Austria and Hungary are like green caterpillars, for (though they appear similar) they are racially distinct, and cannot be ruled together.*"[580]

[579] *Japan Rising – The Iwakura Embassy to the USA and Europe* (Real Author: Kume Kunitake; Editors: Chushichi Tsuzuki, R. Jules Young), Cambridge University Press 2009. p. 424. ; Unfortunately, the telegram has not yet been found, so its exact content is unknown.

[580] Kume Kunitake: *The Iwakura Embassy 1871-73 – A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary's Journey of Observation Through the United States of America and Europe IV.* The Japan Documents, 2002. p. 406.

Regarding the backwardness of the Monarchy, Kume writes:

> "*Austria could not escape being forty years behind the countries to its north-west. It is inevitable that conditions in Austria should be different and still rather unpropitious.*"[581]

In Kume's description, Hungary, "*the farmland of Europe,*" is "*the country of the Huns*", that "*lies on the eastern periphery of Europe, and its customs and ways are quite different from those of Europeans. The people wear strangely old-fashioned clothing and have coarse, peasant features. It is undeniable that they are but semi-civilized."*[582]

> "*Domestic production consists mostly of natural produce, and Hungary makes few industrial products worthy of notice. Over the last seven years, it has awoken from the dreams sustained by old habits and has developed a desire to advance towards civilisation. Hungary's situation, therefore, seems to resemble that of Japan in recent years.*"[583]

When the Iwakura Mission visited the Vienna World's Fair, Kume noted:

> "*Unlike those of Austria, the Hungarian people are unsophisticated and Hungary's industrial arts are undeveloped, so even basic products such as woollens and household goods merited little attention.*"[584]

Kume cites criticisms of Hungary, sometimes drawing on the writings of István Morócz:

> "*However, in 1867, the people achieved their long-cherished goal of gaining their independence. Both high and low were gladdened and suddenly set about developing their land, inspired by a desire to make their country powerful. The government took the lead, devoting more than half its tax revenue to launching grand enterprises. Soldiers were conscripted, the numbers of officials increased, funds were raised and attempts made to expand education. Efforts were undertaken to construct railways, and in the space of two years, eight hundred miles of track were completed. Large amounts of steam-powered machinery were purchased, too. Although huge sums of money were spent, no investigation was made into the*

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[581] *Japan Rising – The Iwakura Embassy to the USA and Europe* (Real Author: Kume Kunitake; Editors: Chushichi Tsuzuki, R. Jules Young), Cambridge University Press 2009. p. 419.

[582] *Japan Rising – The Iwakura Embassy to the USA and Europe* (Real Author: Kume Kunitake; Editors: Chushichi Tsuzuki, R. Jules Young), Cambridge University Press 2009. p. 414., 424. (with translation corrections made by the author)

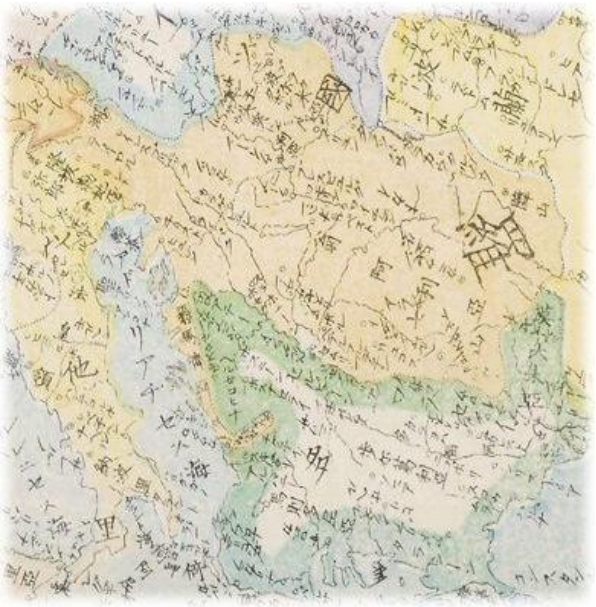
[583] *Japan Rising – The Iwakura Embassy to the USA and Europe* (Real Author: Kume Kunitake; Editors: Chushichi Tsuzuki, R. Jules Young), Cambridge University Press 2009. p. 424.

[584] Kume Kunitake: *The Iwakura Embassy 1871-73 – A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary's Journey of Observation Through the United States of America and Europe V.* Continental Europe, 3; and the voyage home. The Japan Documents, 2002. p. 29.

factors which nurture the process of civilisation, and in many ways energy and financial resources were simply wasted to create an attractive facade."[585]

"*One of the major shortcomings of Hungary is the lack of roads. Most of the country is flat, and in wet weather, it becomes a morass and no vehicles can move. This is a major hindrance not only for the transportation of agricultural produce. No matter how much ore may be produced by the mines, they have difficulties moving the ore to where it is needed. (...) Therefore, although some railways have been constructed, it is as if a man had only arteries and the veins were missing so his health suffered accordingly.* "[586]

A noteworthy detail for historians of cartography is that the members of the Iwakura Mission may also have used a colour world map published in Japan in 1871, the year of their departure, based on French, Dutch, and English cartographic sources.



[585] *Japan Rising – The Iwakura Embassy to the USA and Europe* (Real Author: Kume Kunitake; Editors: Chushichi Tsuzuki, R. Jules Young), Cambridge University Press 2009. p. 425.

[586] Kume Kunitake: *The Iwakura Embassy 1871-73 – A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary's Journey of Observation Through the United States of America and Europe IV.* Continental Europe, 2. The Japan Documents, 2002. p. 408.

Details of an 1871 Japanese world map based on Western maps, showing Hungary (Onkaria/Ongaria)[587]

[587] 重訂万国全図 山路諧孝 大学南校 明治4（1871）年

Chapter Three:
Diplomacy and Foreign Trade

The meeting of Japan and Europe – The emergence of the Western powers in Japan – Unequal treaties between the great powers and Japan from the second half of the 19th century – The first era of globalization – The first phase of diplomatic relations between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Japan and the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation of 1869 – Revision of the unequal treaties and Japan's second and third treaty with Austria-Hungary – Foreign trade between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Japan – Diplomatic relations, diplomatic missions – Japanese honors awarded to Hungarians

The meeting of Japan and Europe

Trade brought Europe and Japan closer together in the 16th century. Three hundred years later, Japan's 'opening' to Western trade laid the foundations for a system of bilateral relations. The first Europeans to set foot on Japanese soil were Portuguese sailors in 1543, followed soon after by Jesuit missionaries. From 1641 to 1853, Japan largely closed itself off from the West in response to the influence of Christian missionaries and the associated economic and political pressures. (However, it is argued that Christianity was rejected in the early 16th century primarily out of fear that separatist domain rulers might use it for their own ends, rather than due to any perceived threat from Western Christian powers.) During this period, Christian missionaries were executed, local Christians were persecuted, and nearly all trade with Europe was severed. Only the Dutch and Chinese were permitted limited trade, restricted to the island of Deshima near Nagasaki. At the same time, limited diplomatic and trade relations with Korea were maintained through the Joseon Dynasty, facilitated by the Tsushima Domain. In 1842, news of the Chinese Opium War[588] reached Japan, causing significant concern, as China was then regarded as the

[588] After the First Opium War in 1842, the British Empire imposed free trade on China, leading to a rapid succession of treaties between China and the major powers. China's vulnerability further increased after the Second Opium War (1858) and the Third Opium War (1860). During the Meiji period, Japan banned recreational opium but allowed regulated medicinal use, with strict reporting, licensing, and limits on sales. The 1870 regulation distinguished between opium suitable for smoking and raw opium, but low-quality raw opium with less than 6% morphine was often used recreationally. Pharmacists and doctors were limited to selling 150 grams at a time, only to those with prescriptions, and had to submit semi-annual sales records. Although the 1871 Amity Treaty between Japan and China omitted an opium prohibition and left extraterritoriality unresolved, Japanese authorities still attempted to enforce domestic opium laws on Chinese residents. This intrusion into private homes provoked protests and culminated in the violent Nagasaki opium incident in 1883. Rising demand from wars and cholera outbreaks, along with smuggling, prompted the 1879 medicinal opium monopoly, standardization of drug formulas, and government control over domestic poppy cultivation and imports, particularly from the Ottoman Empire. The government also promoted Western-style patent medicines,

strongest power in Asia. The threat from the West was growing: British, American, and French ships, equipped with advanced weaponry, began appearing off Japan's coast, demanding trade relations and concessions. While Japan managed to delay Western incursions with cautious and improvised political strategies, this approach proved unsustainable. In July 1853, American Commodore Matthew Perry arrived with a fleet of heavily armed "black ships", whose firepower left Japan unable to resist further.[589] Perry returned in 1854, and in March, under the threat of force, Japan signed the Treaty of Kanagawa, establishing formal relations with the United States.[590] It is not widely known that Perry combined military threats with symbolic cultural diplomacy, including parades, technological demonstrations, and musical performances. His approach reflected racialized views of Japanese inferiority and American superiority. These strategies contributed to the signing of the Treaty of Kanagawa in 1854, while exhibitions such as blackface minstrelsy[591] reinforced Anglo-American racial and cultural dominance. Perry's mission thus relied not only on hard military power but also on carefully orchestrated symbolic and 'cultural' displays. Another lesser-known fact is that a German-chartered ship, Greta, accompanied Commodore Perry's fleet to supply coal. Its supercargo, Friedrich August Lühdorf, carried a variety of trade goods to sell in Japan, becoming the first recorded German to help lay the foundation for future German commercial activities in the country, even though he was part of an American mission.[592]

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including opiate-based products, produced by state-owned and private pharmaceutical companies, widely used for various ailments and sometimes resulting in habitual consumption. Later, more potent opiates such as hypodermic morphine and heroin were introduced. Despite growing awareness of addiction during the Russo-Japanese War, formal laws to prevent narcotics addiction were only enacted in 1934. See: Judith Vitale: *Opiates and the 'Therapeutic Revolution' in Japan*. In: Social History of Medicine Vol. 34, No. 3 pp. 951–960.

[589] Conrad Totman: *Japán története*, Bp., Osiris Kiadó, 2006., pp. 387-388.

[590] Although Perry's mission is typically characterized as 'gunboat diplomacy', he showed a softer side by serving Japanese diplomats sparkling beverages at a dinner on the *Powhatan*, an act that can be seen as an early example of U.S. "soft power" – or, as Darren L. Swanson playfully notes, "soft-drink power" – in shaping relations with Japan. Darren Lee Swanson: *Treaty Port Society and the Club in Meiji Japan: Clubbism, Athleticism and the Public Sphere*, Phd Thesis, University of Sydney, 2016., p 357. http://hdl.handle.net/2123/16921

[591] Minstrel Shows or minstrelsy refers to a specific and highly controversial form of theatrical 'entertainment'. These shows featured white performers in blackface to perform comic skits, variety acts, and music. The performances were built on racist stereotypes that mocked African Americans, portraying them as dim-witted, lazy, or superstitious. See: Giulia Orefice Paticchio: *Music as cultural diplomacy. The case of the introduction of Western music in Meiji Era Japan*. Phd. LUISS, 2020. pp. 75-79.

[592] Holmer Stahncke: *Friedrich August Lühdorfs Handelsexpedition nach Japan*. In: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens no 39. 1988.

Japanese illustrations about Perry

The emergence of the Western powers in Japan

There is a much longer history to the West's attempts to penetrate Japan. Despite Japan's apparent 'isolation' from the West, it maintained limited trade relations with China and the Netherlands. The Bakufu, the central government of the Tokugawa shogunate, was aware of Russian threats to Japan's northern regions long before Perry's arrival. In 1771, they learned of this threat through a letter sent by Count Maurice Benyovszky (Hungarian: Benyovszky Móric Ágost),[593] a military officer, adventurer, and writer from the Kingdom of Hungary, to a Dutch trading post. The threat from the West continued to grow. Beginning in 1808, during the Napoleonic Wars, the British sent ships to Nagasaki, while American whaling vessels started appearing off the Japanese coast in the late 18th century. However, it was not until the late 1840s that attempts to establish formal treaties became common. In 1846, James Biddle anchored two ships – one of them a warship – in Tokyo Bay in an effort to negotiate a trade treaty with Japan. The Japanese refused his proposal, forcing him to turn back, much as Perry would also encounter resistance during his initial visit. This was also true for the Russian envoy Yevfimiy Putyatin, who arrived in Nagasaki in 1853. He returned to Japan in 1854 and, following the Americans and Perry, concluded the Russo-Japanese Treaty of Friendship. Perry's Treaty of Kanagawa in 1854 became the

[593] Benyovszky was born in Verbó (present-day Slovakia, then part of Hungary) in 1746. In 1767, he participated in the anti-King Polish noblemen's movement, was captured by the Russians, and exiled to Kamchatka in 1770. In May 1771, he was deported but escaped on July 11, 1771. He then sailed along the coasts of the Aleutian Islands, Alaska, and Japan, reaching Macao, by the end of September 1771. During his time near the Japanese coast, Benyovszky wrote to a Dutch official, informing them that two Russian warships had conducted a secret military mission off the coast of Japan in 1771 and were preparing to attack Hokkaido. The letter was translated into Japanese by the Dutch and forwarded to the Japanese authorities. Benyovszky is also mentioned in the contemporary official diary of the head of the Dutch factory, The Deshima Diaries 1740-1800, published in 2004 by the Japan-Netherlands Institute in Tokyo.

first formal agreement Japan signed with a Western power, paving the way for expanded trade and diplomatic relations starting in 1858. A new era in Japanese history began on July 29, 1858, with the signing of the Japan-U.S. Trade Treaty, finalized under the shadow of American warships.

The Treaty of Kanagawa has often been portrayed as a bold yet peaceful enforcement of Western international norms, marking Japan's shift from a "closed" to an "open" nation.[594] This framing supports the dominant narrative of a successful U.S. mission and continues to shape both popular and some academic understandings of the Perry expedition. In contrast, recent scholarship adopting less Eurocentric perspectives has questioned the validity of *sakoku* (鎖国, meaning closed country) as a clear-cut framework, challenging the narrative of a strict divide between pre- and post-Perry Japan. In the early 17th century, Japan adopted the sakoku policy, which aimed to limit foreign influence and trade. This policy involved strict regulation of foreign interactions, with only limited contact allowed with certain countries at specific ports. In 1801, Shizuki Tadao coined the term *sakoku-ron* (鎖国論) to describe Japan's seclusion, but it wasn't officially used until 1858. Since the Meiji Restoration, *sakoku* has been misused in historiography, suggesting a long-standing, unified policy of isolation. In reality, Tokugawa Japan's foreign policy was based on strict regulation and controlled contact, not *complete closure*. The Western historiographical misuse of the concept of *sakoku* distorts historical accuracy, oversimplifies Japan's foreign relations, and reinforces the claim that the Perry mission 'opened' Japan. This narrative overlooks the nuanced nature of Tokugawa policy, including the well-managed points of entry and the fact that Tokugawa officials were well-informed about the world, challenging the idea of total isolation. It is also significant because of the role Americans and Europeans played in retroactively shaping Japan's national policy, aligning it with contemporary Western portrayals of Japan as a quintessentially closed nation. This example shows how images of Japan as a mystical, self-isolated, faraway land were constructed in the West. Andrew Elliot aptly notes the evergreen historiographical parable of the 'opening of Japan' as follows: *"whatever the recent historiographical emphasis on Japan's connectivity and interaction with global movements",* the idea of the opening of Japan *"continues as a recurring trope in Western representations of Japan throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century (...). (...) Are western visitors to*

[594] There is a hilarious parodic depiction of Perry asking the Japanese to open their country, in a fabulous sketch by Tomu Miyazaki, a comedian in the viral video「ペリーのお願い」, which originated on the 2007 CD album『今度も店じまい』(講談社、宮崎吐夢). The sketch reimagines Commodore Matthew Perry's role in opening Japan, portraying him in a playful, anachronistic manner. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8KasfSKRzf0 (accessed: 2025 Nov.)

Japan, or Western writers and commentators about Japan, condemned to repeat its opening? (...) must westerners endlessly play out (...) a narrative established two centuries ago? Japan, sealed and silent. The West, active and loquacious, forcing disclosure, demanding speech and a particular way of speaking." [595]

Unequal treaties between the great powers and Japan from the second half of the 19th century

The Treaty of Kanagawa, signed in March 1854 between Commodore Perry and the Tokugawa shogunate, was the first unequal treaty that initiated the opening of Japanese ports to a Western power. The term 'unequal treaties' was not used until the early 20th century; at the time, they were simply referred to as 'the treaties'. It should be noted that postmodern historiography inevitably confronts itself with political correctness and ideological expectations when dealing with this term. For some, 'unequal treaties' is considered too nationalistic or politically charged, prompting a retreat into supposedly neutral or descriptive language. What follows is a parade of postmodern linguistic evasions – from "*so-called unequal treaties*" and "*treaties with extraterritorial provisions*" to more creative softmodern (i.e., postmodern and politically sanitized) formulations such as "*imbalanced treaties*", "*asymmetrical treaties*", or "*treaties signed under duress*". In the most refined corners of politically cautious postmodern minds, even these terms are avoided altogether in favor of bland, label-free descriptions. (The author of this book will use the term *unequal treaties*, but with a healthy dose of criticism whenever it's due – and shows no interest in crawling deeper into the abyss of the rabbit hole that is the postmodern word-choice game.)

The Treaty of Kanagawa opened the ports of Shimoda and Hakodate to U.S. ships for refueling, provided aid to American shipwreck survivors, and permitted a U.S. consul to reside in Shimoda. The Treaty of Kanagawa is considered unequal because it was signed under U.S. military pressure, granted benefits only to the U.S. without reciprocity, compromised Japan's sovereignty, and set a precedent for further Western impositions. The Treaty of Shimoda, signed in 1855, was the first agreement in which Japan consented to open its ports – Nagasaki, Shimoda, and Hakodate – to a foreign power (Russia) for *trade and currency exchange*. This marked a historic shift and set a precedent for Japan's

[595] Andrew Elliott: *Hospitality, the Perry Narrative, and the "Opening of Japan"*. In: English Language Notes, 48:2, 2010. pp. 51-57.; 65.

subsequent treaties with other Western nations. Recently accessible German, Dutch, Russian, and French archival documents demonstrate that Philipp Franz von Siebold – a German physician who lived in Japan during the late Edo period and later served as an advisor to European governments on Japanese affairs – played a pivotal role in shaping the Treaty of Shimoda. His input significantly influenced both the negotiations led by Vice-Admiral Yevfimy Putiatin, a Russian naval officer and diplomat, and the final wording of the treaty. A particularly telling piece of evidence is Siebold's 1852 letter to the Russian ambassador in Berlin, in which he outlines strategic advice on how Russia should approach diplomatic engagement with Japan.[596] The Treaty of Shimoda laid critical groundwork for the Ansei Treaties of 1858, signed between Japan and several Western powers, including the United States, Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Russia. These subsequent treaties expanded upon the principles established in the Shimoda agreement, formalizing broader trade rights, diplomatic recognition, and extraterritorial privileges. Siebold's behind-the-scenes influence thus not only shaped early Russo-Japanese relations but also indirectly contributed to the diplomatic framework that defined Japan's initial phase of Western engagement. The treaties of 1858 are referred to as the Ansei Treaties, as they were signed in the 5th year of the Ansei era. These treaties acted as a bridge between pre-modern and modern Japan, and the responses to them played a crucial role in shaping Japanese history. For Western countries, foreign trade was a prerequisite for treaty relations, but for Japan, it was initially of secondary importance. Until the 1850s, Japan was an island nation that could control the extent and volume of trade with foreigners. With the Ansei Treaties, though, everything changed. Japan had minimal room for maneuver in shaping the treaties, yet it tried to keep foreigners within certain limits. It was in Japan's vital interest to maintain control over its own land and to keep the physical encroachment of the West as limited as possible. Later, the early Meiji leaders also sought to maintain the boundaries that had been established between foreigners and the Japanese during the Tokugawa era.

Japan signed further treaties with the Netherlands (1858), England (1858), France (1858), Portugal (1860), Prussia (1861), Switzerland (1864), Belgium (1866), Italy (1866), and Denmark (1867). Following the establishment of the Meiji government in 1868, similar

[596] Edgar Franz: *Siebold's Involvement in the Friendship Treaty between Japan and Russia*. In: Ritsumeikan International Affairs Vol.6, (2008), pp. 99-125.

agreements were concluded with Sweden-Norway (1868), Spain (1868), the North German Confederation (1869), and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1869).[597]

Treaty	First		Second		Third	
	Signing	In force	Signing	In force	Signing	In force
AT-HU	1869. 10.	1872. 01.	1897. 12.	1899. 08.	1912/10	1913. 03.
GB	1858. 08.	1858. 08.	1894. 07.	1899. 07.	1911. 04.	1911. 07.
USA	1858. 07.	1858. 07.	1894. 11.	1899. 07.	1911. 02.	1911. 07.
GER	1869. 02.	1869. 02.	1896. 04.	1899. 07.	1911. 06.	1915. 04.
FR	1858. 10.	1859. 08.	1896. 08.	1899. 08.	1911. 08.	1912. 02.
IT	1866. 08.	1867. 01.	1894. 12.	1899. 07.	1911. 07.	1911. 07.

Main Western treaties with Japan[598]

Unequal treaties had six main characteristics. **First** of all, the loose wording of the unequal treaties made flexible interpretations possible, enabling them to govern relations for forty years without major revision. Their adaptability let diplomats adjust implementation over time, responding to changing circumstances and negotiations between Japan and the Western powers.[599] **Second**, there was a contradiction between the rhetoric of agreement and the reality of unequal power relations between the two parties. Japan was forced to open its doors to Western trade under duress, and the terms of trade were far from equitable, despite being cloaked in diplomatic rhetoric. The **third** characteristic was an issue within the West itself. The most-favoured-nation (MFN) principle in the treaties ensured that there could be no competition between the contracting Western countries in Japan. Each state received all the rights and privileges previously secured by others, effectively making them equal partners in the race for Japanese markets. As a result, typical imperialist competition was largely absent, as any change agreed upon in a new treaty automatically applied to all signatory nations. In light of the MFN clause, the benefits

[597] An excellent study on the treaties was written by Harald Kleinschmidt. *Establishing Peace and Making Peace Treaties: The Contradictoriness of the European Public Law of Relations between States and Big-Power Foreign Policy at the Middle of the Nineteenth Century*, published as part of the Publikationsportal Europäische Friedensverträge by the Institut für Europäische Geschichte, Mainz, in 2008.
https://www.ieg-friedensvertraege.de/publikationsportal/kleinschmidt-harald-establishing-peace-2008 (accessed: 2024 Dec.)
[598] After Masayuki Shimada
[599] Andreas Eichleter: *The Treaty Port Press and the Transformation of Yokohama From the Opening of the Treaty Port to the Beginning of Treaty Revision, 1859-1884*, PhD Thesis 2021, Heidelberg, p. 100.

of the treaties were automatically extended to the Western signatories but not to Japan. The **fourth** characteristic was the threat these treaties posed to Japan's internal security and social structure in their early stages, ultimately sealing the fate of the Tokugawa shogunate. In their agreements with Japan, Western powers reserved the right of extraterritoriality or consular jurisdiction,[600] meaning Japanese authorities were not permitted to try cases involving foreign nationals in Japan. Darren Lee Swanson aptly notes that extraterritoriality was a system rooted in British colonial practice, designed to generate profit by turning treaty ports into tax havens. In Japan, as in China, this arrangement allowed Western traders to import goods at a single reduced tariff at the point of entry, avoiding the multiple charges normally imposed, and thus made access to Asian markets highly attractive.[601] At the same time, from a strictly legal perspective, it should also be noted that in treaties concluded up to 1868, this system was not inherently disadvantageous for the Tokugawa government, since it was widely accepted that foreigners would be governed by their own laws while in foreign territories.[602] It is also true that extraterritoriality enabled foreign powers to gradually expand their control through concessions that undermined local sovereignty. Unlike in Europe, these treaties imposed broad limitations on non-European states, granting extensive legal immunities to foreign nationals, not just officials. Foreign consuls often handled legal matters involving their citizens, bypassing local jurisdiction and allowing foreigners to operate freely, shielded from potentially hostile local systems. In practice, foreign powers handled most legal cases involving their citizens through their own consular courts. This included nearly all civil disputes (between foreigners or involving Japanese suing foreigners) and criminal cases where a foreigner was the defendant. Japan attempted to assert jurisdiction in certain cases – especially when Japanese were defendants or in disputes involving its government – but was largely unsuccessful. As a result, foreign courts dominated legal authority over their nationals in Japan. Because of extraterritoriality, Japanese citizens who wanted to sue foreigners had to use foreign consular courts instead of their own. This system caused resentment in Japan, especially because it often led to dissatisfaction with how cases were handled, contributing to growing opposition to extraterritorial privileges. The extraterritorial system in Japan was inconsistent and often ineffective because each of the many Treaty

[600] the privilege which a Contracting State grants to certain persons within its territory so that they are not subject to local jurisdiction

[601] Darren Lee Swanson: *Treaty Port Society and the Club in Meiji Japan: Clubbism, Athleticism and the Public Sphere*, Phd Thesis, University of Sydney, 2016., p. 52. http://hdl.handle.net/2123/16921

[602] Michael R. Auslin: *Negotiating with Imperialism* – The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of Japanese Diplomacy. Harvard Univ. Press, 2004. p. 157.

Powers ran its own courts and applied its own laws. This lack of uniformity created unequal legal standards for foreigners and made it difficult for Japanese plaintiffs to navigate the system.[603] As for the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, extraterritorial jurisdiction was likely involved in a case that remained hidden in Japan, according to a document found in a Japanese archive. On 1 February 1888, Gustav Kreitner, representing the Austro-Hungarian consulate, went to the Japanese tax office regarding a travel box containing a deceased musician's belongings, arguing they should be duty-free under the treaty between Austria-Hungary and Japan.[604] The commissioner explained that since the value of the contents was unknown, Kreitner would need to consent to the package being opened to assess duties if applicable, and stated that duties would apply if the items were found taxable. Kreitner claimed the goods should be exempt since they now belonged to the consulate, referencing treaty articles requiring consular approval before customs could open consular packages, and argued that the treaty required no specific declaration form while exempting consular goods from duty. The commissioner disagreed, stating that the treaty did not prevent customs from inspecting and holding goods without consular approval unless they were proven to be official consular property, and that consulate ownership alone did not automatically grant duty exemption. While Kreitner maintained his interpretation, the commissioner, after consulting higher authorities, decided to hold the items at customs and agreed to issue a certificate confirming they were being held. Kreitner paid his interpreter, Yoshi, one yen for his services, and left the office. The case likely concluded with Japanese customs imposing a fine or duty on the confiscated items, which, due to extraterritoriality, would be reported to the Austro-Hungarian legation's judge, with no possibility of appeal. Between 1891 and 1913, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy is not known to have exercised consular jurisdiction in Japan, whereas in China it exercised such jurisdiction in at least two cases during the same period.[605] Especially in regions outside the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans, although the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was entitled to consular jurisdiction de jure, its actual exercise of that jurisdiction remained quite limited de facto, due to the lack of significant trade and commercial presence in the area.[606] Japan achieved its goal of abolishing extraterritoriality in 1899: the process began

[603] F. C. Jones: Extraterritoriality in Japan, 1931 Yale University Press, pp. 27-30., 44., 48., 58.
[604] 輸入品課税に付税関長対オーストリア=ハンガリー領事との対話に関する件, 目賀田家文書第12号
[605] Teschmayer Gábor: *A konzuli bíráskodás intézménye az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia külügyi igazgatásában.* In: Acta Beregsasiensis: a II. Rákóczi Ferenc Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskola tudományos évkönyve. 2010. IX. évfolyam, 3. kötet. p. 119.
[606] Teschmayer Gábor: *A magyar konzuli tevékenység és bíráskodás az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia alatt: szabályozás, szervezet és gyakorlat.* PhD. értekezés. 2019. KRE. p. 196.

with the signing of the 1894 Aoki-Kimberley Treaty with Great Britain – the first in a series of new treaties that abolished extraterritorial rights for foreigners and symbolized Japan's emerging international status. It came into effect on July 17, 1899. However, this development was met with apprehension from the foreign community in Japan, particularly merchants who feared losing their trade monopoly. One of the 'everyday technical aspects' of extraterritoriality in Japan was that it only allowed foreigners to reside in designated settlements (居留地) within open ports for safety and trade. Unlike in China or the Middle East, Japan grouped all foreigners together rather than granting separate national concessions. These areas were used by the Meiji government to control foreign movement and prevent the expansion of extraterritorial privileges. Travel beyond these areas was strictly regulated, with exceptions for foreign employees, who required special permits and supervision. Japan resisted opening its interior (内地) until treaty revisions allowed for the abolition of extraterritorial rights.[607] The **fifth** characteristic of the unequal treaties was their restriction on Japan's ability to impose its own tariffs freely. There were fixed tariffs on imported and exported goods, generally capped at five percent. The "unequal treaties" imposed on Japan were disadvantageous because they restricted Japan's ability to control its own tariff policy and excluded it from the reciprocal benefits enjoyed by Western countries. Japan was required to keep low import tariffs and could not use a dual-tariff system combining general and negotiated rates. At the same time, Western powers did not grant Japan equivalent concessions and instead imposed high tariffs on Japanese exports. Even the most-favoured-nation clauses were one-sided, preventing Japan from benefiting from trade agreements between European states. As a result, Japan was effectively shut out of the European-based conventional tariff network and denied equal participation in the international trade system of the time.[608] Nineteenth-century global economic integration was largely driven by a growing network of bilateral commercial treaties, especially from the 1860s onward, in which countries negotiated "conventional tariffs" that set import duties through diplomacy rather than unilateral policy. This expanding web of treaties formed what scholars call a *conventional tariff network*, which helped stabilize international trade by encouraging reciprocal concessions and making trade relations more predictable and resilient. There are interpretations arguing that this system collapsed in the 1890s, while

[607] Hazel J. Jones: *The Formulation of the Meiji Government Policy Toward the Employment of Foreigners*. In: Monumenta Nipponica, 1968, Vol. 23, No. 1/2 (1968), p. 19.
[608] Toshiki Kawashima: *A European political-economic space that embraced Japan: the international context of the conventional-tariff network, ca.1892–1914*. In: European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire, 25:3-4, 2018. p. 618. DOI: 10.1080/13507486.2018.1442419

others reject this view, maintaining that the network actually persisted and even evolved, with its center shifting toward Central Europe and later extending to East Asia by the early twentieth century. Because the system was based on flexible economic negotiation rather than fixed political alliances, it proved durable despite broader geopolitical changes. In this latter interpretation, Meiji Japan is presented not primarily as gaining full tariff autonomy, but as being integrated into this European-originated treaty system, effectively aligning its trade policy with a global structure of negotiated tariffs associated with its broader "leaving Asia, entering Europe" orientation.[609] In the context of unequal treaties between Japan and Western powers, Japan's diplomatic efforts from the 1870s onward to renegotiate these agreements can be understood as an attempt to gain equal access to the international conventional tariff network. By revising the unequal treaty clauses, Japan sought greater control over its tariff policy and the ability to use it strategically like European states. Japan's treaty renegotiations between the 1890s and the 1910s gradually succeeded in improving its position in international trade. In the first phase, up to the late 1890s, efforts led to partial revisions of the unfair tariff arrangements. In the second phase, from the early 1900s to the early 1910s, Japan achieved broader success by gaining access to the conventional tariff network, marking deeper integration into the international trade system.[610] In the first round of treaty renegotiations in the 1890s, Japan made partial progress toward entering the European conventional tariff system. This was aided by shifting international politics, including Britain's interest in strengthening Japan after the First Sino-Japanese War to counter Russian expansion. Japan concluded new commercial treaties with Britain, Germany, France, and Austria-Hungary, and introduced a Customs Tariff Law that set general tariff rates, allowing it to begin adopting a dual-tariff system. However, the agreements were still unequal because they lacked reciprocity: most European powers, including Britain, France, and Germany, did not grant Japan meaningful tariff concessions. Austria-Hungary was the only exception, offering limited reductions on specific Japanese exports such as raw silk, copper, and a few other commodities. Even so, most MFN clauses remained non-reciprocal. Despite these limitations, the renegotiations represented an important step toward Japan's integration into the European treaty-based

[609] Toshiki Kawashima: *A European political-economic space that embraced Japan: the international context of the conventional-tariff network, ca.1892–1914*. In: European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire, 25:3-4, 2018. pp. 613., 618-619. DOI: 10.1080/13507486.2018.1442419

[610] Toshiki Kawashima: *A European political-economic space that embraced Japan: the international context of the conventional-tariff network, ca.1892–1914*. In: European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire, 25:3-4, 2018. p. 619. DOI: 10.1080/13507486.2018.1442419

trade network.[611] The **sixth** characteristic was the absence of a specific expiry date, combined with a nearly unattainable requirement that any changes shall receive the consent of all contracting parties. Although renegotiations were allowed, Western powers long resisted Japan's requests for revisions.

At the time of the unequal treaties, international geopolitics revolved around the principle that "*Power/Might is Right*", a view rooted in European international law. Alexis Dudden argues that international law in the 19th and 20th centuries functioned less as a universal legal system and more as a "belief system" used by Western powers – and later Japan – to dominate nations lacking military strength. Under this framework, only so-called 'civilized' countries were treated as full legal subjects, while 'uncivilized' nations were deemed unfit to represent themselves.[612] Japan had to accept this framework not only to be recognized as a 'modern, civilized nation' governed by law, but also to establish its own modern legal system. The Meiji government believed that by doing so, it could earn the good faith of the West and secure Japan's survival as an independent sovereign state. In time, Meiji leaders began using this very framework to construct Japan's own sphere of influence in East Asia – relying on the same European international law that had once been imposed upon them.

The first era of globalization

One of the key changes in the 19th century has been the integration of national economies into a global system, known as globalization. This has led to a significant increase in international trade. The unequal treaties, in many ways, set the stage for a rapid expansion of global trade. The period between 1870 and 1914 is often referred to as the "*first era of globalization*" marked by major advances in transportation (e.g. steamships, railroads) and communication (e.g. the telegraph), which enabled large-scale international trade. Global exports grew significantly in the late 19th century. In the early 1870s, exports were around one-quarter of their 1913 level, but they rose steadily through the late 19th century, driven by expanding industrialization and improved transportation. By the early 1910s, export volumes neared the 1913 peak, underscoring the breadth of global economic integration before the outbreak of World War I.

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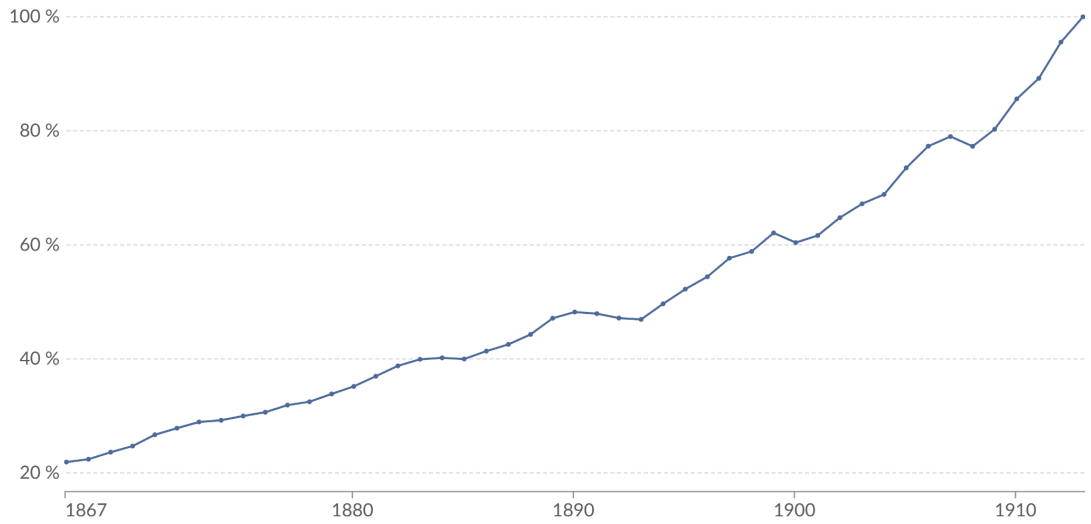
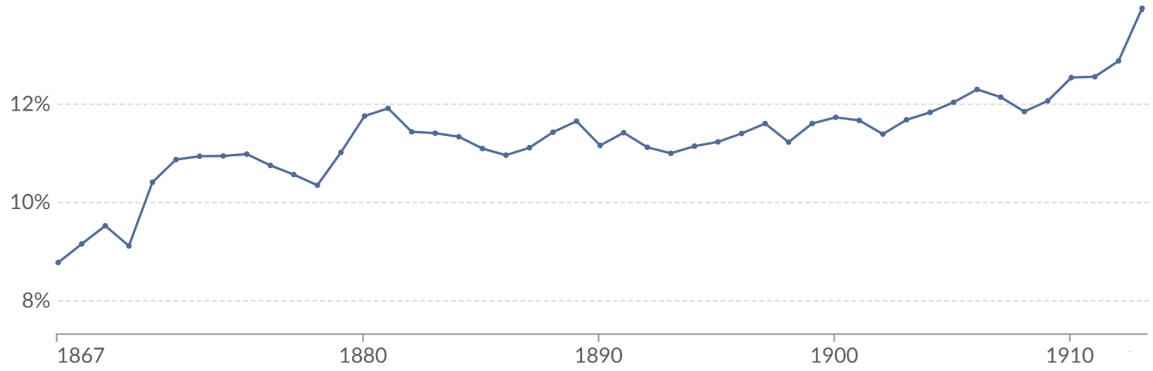
[611] Toshiki Kawashima: *A European political-economic space that embraced Japan: the international context of the conventional-tariff network, ca.1892–1914*. In: European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire, 25:3-4, 2018. p. 619. DOI: 10.1080/13507486.2018.1442419

[612] Alexis Dudden: *Japan's Colonization of Korea*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005.



Growth of global exports – total world exports adjusted for inflation (constant prices), relative to 1913. Values correspond to world export volumes indexed to 1913.[613]

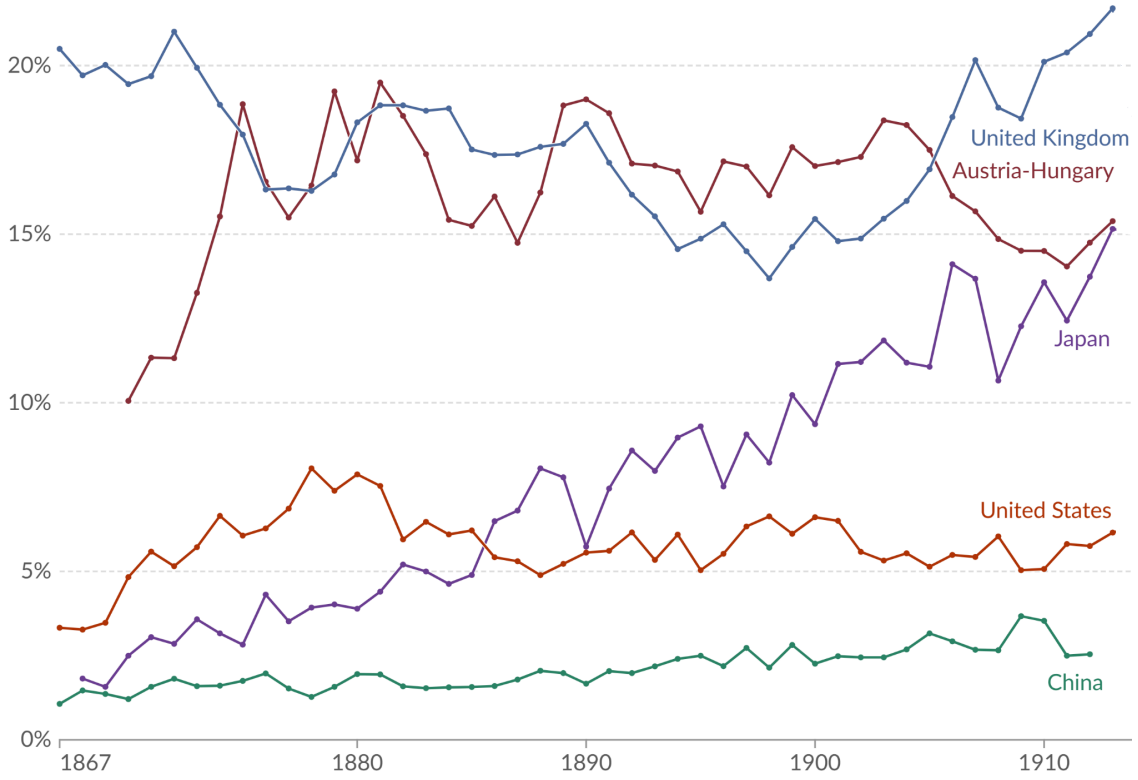
As shown in the chart below, the global export-to-GDP ratio rose during this time, reflecting growing economic interdependence among nations.



Value of exported goods as share of GDP (World, 1867-1913) – total value of merchandise exports divided by gross domestic product, expressed as a percentage[614]

The next chart shows the same data for Britain, Austria-Hungary, Japan, the United States, and China.

[613] Data Source: Federico and Tena-Junguito (2016). ourworldindata.org/trade-and-globalization (accessed: 2025 Apr.)
[614] Data Source: Fouquin and Hugot (CEPII 2016). ourworldindata.org/trade-and-globalization (accessed: 2025 Apr.)

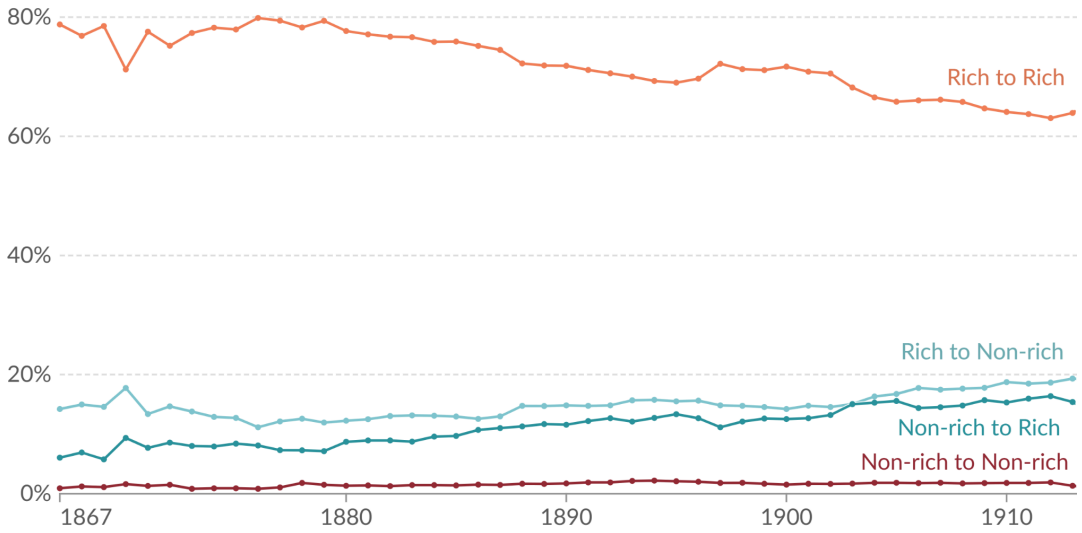


Value of exported goods as share of GDP (UK, AT-HU, JP, US, CN, 1867-1913) – total value of merchandise exports divided by gross domestic product, expressed as a percentage[615]

If one examines the structure of international merchandise trade between 1867 and 1913, focusing on who traded with whom based on income levels, it is striking to see that the majority of global trade was conducted primarily among “rich countries”. In the chart below, rich countries include Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Great Britain, and the United States of America. All other countries for which data is available are classified as ‘non-rich’. There were four main types of trade relationships: between rich countries, from non-rich to rich countries, from rich to non-rich countries, and between non-rich countries. Throughout this period, most global trade occurred between rich countries, although their share gradually declined. At the same time, exports from non-rich to rich countries slowly increased, while trade between non-rich countries remained minimal. This pattern reflects the economic hierarchy of the first era of globalization, during which global trade was dominated by a relatively small group of industrialized nations. It also underscores the unbalanced nature of globalization in this era, as poorer economies were primarily

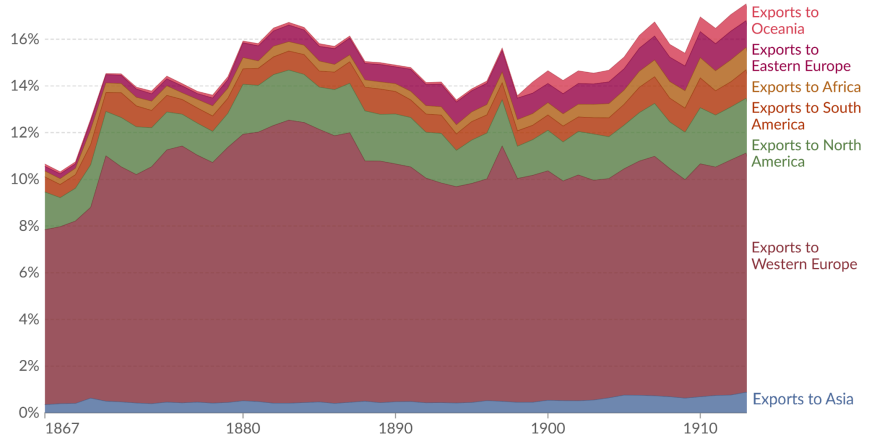
[615] Data Source: Fouquin and Hugot (CEPII 2016). ourworldindata.org/trade-and-globalization (accessed: 2025 Apr.)

integrated into the global economy through their connections to wealthier countries rather than through mutual exchange among themselves.



Share of global exports by income level of the trade partners – The 'non-rich to rich' trade series shows the proportion of global merchandise exports that correspond to sales from non-rich countries to rich countries.[616]

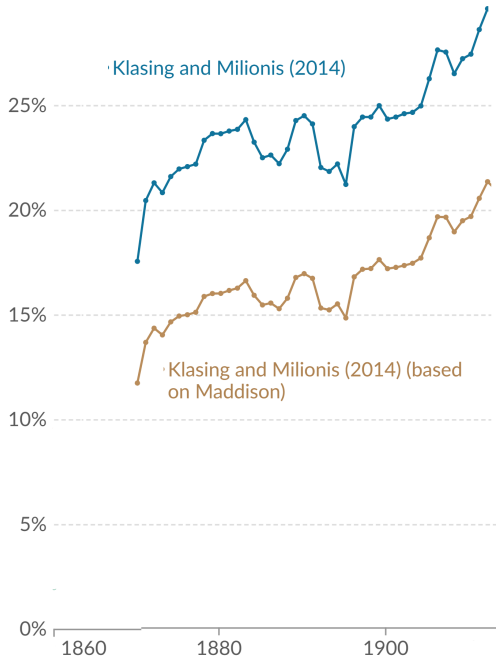
Furthermore, an examination of merchandise exports by continent of destination clearly shows that Western Europe was the primary destination. In other words, Western European trade in the 19th century was mainly fueled by commerce within the region. Between 1830 and 1900, intra-European exports grew from 1% to 10% of GDP, effectively doubling their share in the overall economy.



Merchandise exports by continent of destination, Western Europe, 1867 to 1913. Figures correspond to the value of merchandise exports by continental destination as a share of GDP. All partner countries are classified into continent groupings[617]

[616] Data Source: Fouquin and Hugot (CEPII 2016). ourworldindata.org/trade-and-globalization (accessed: 2025 Apr.)
[617] Data Source: Fouquin and Hugot (CEPII 2016). ourworldindata.org/trade-and-globalization (accessed: 2025 Apr.)
Shown are the merchandise trade estimates from dyadic transactions data. The series labeled 'Western Europe – Western

Looking at the 'trade openness index' at the global level, it shows how important international trade was for the world economy at the time. It gives us a sense of how interconnected the world was through trade: a higher index indicates that a large share of global economic activity involved the exchange of goods and services across borders.



Trade openness index 1867-1913 – defined as the sum of world exports and imports, divided by world GDP, according to two sources[618]

The first phase of diplomatic relations between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Japan and the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation of 1869

Before the First World War, Japan signed three treaties with the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The first of these, the Japan-Austria-Hungary Treaty of Friendship (Amity), Commerce, and Navigation, incorporated elements from earlier treaties Japan had concluded with other nations. Some aspects were modified, particularly those concerning residence, movement, territorial sovereignty, and certain customs duties in Japan. This treaty drew upon an agreement signed on February 20, 1869, between Japan and the North German Confederation.[619] The British Minister, Harry Parkes, played a pivotal role in

Europe' for example, corresponds to the sum of exports between all Western European countries, divided by the GDP of Western Europe.

[618] Data Source: Klasing and Milinois (2014) and other sources. ourworldindata.org/trade-and-globalization (accessed: 2025 Apr.)

[619] Metlekovits Sándor: *Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia vámpolitikája 1850-től kezdve napjainkig*. Bp., Franklin Társulat, 1877., p. 124. ; see also: Harald Kleinschmidt: *Establishing Peace and Making Peace Treaties. The*

drafting and preparing the treaty, with additional input from the French, Germans, and Americans. (In some strands of British historiography, there is a lingering interpretation that the Austro-Hungarian–Japanese treaty effectively functioned as a "second British treaty".)[620] Each sought to clarify ambiguities in earlier agreements in ways that would benefit their respective countries, with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy considered only secondarily, regardless of whether it could fully capitalize on the treaty's potential.[621] The surprisingly swift progress was largely due to Parkes' diplomatic efforts. In order to assess the significance of the English intervention in Japan, we can read the account of a Hungarian delegation member, who described the difficulties Austro-Hungarian representatives faced when negotiating with the Chinese government:

> "*While we were staying in Che-Foo, negotiations with the Chinese government made no progress; the Chinese representatives created difficulties at every turn. They followed the principle of "svaviter in modo, fortiter in re"*[622] *to the letter, and at every meeting with them, it was almost impossible to get a word in edgewise due to their extreme politeness and flattering expressions. Not only did they refuse to budge from their initial position on certain points of the treaty, they even sought to impose restrictions. I do not know whether these difficulties were caused by pure petty annoyance or deliberate intent, but I am inclined to believe the latter. They knew very well that the Europeans had not come to Beijing to have fun, and that keeping them here without serious reasons and prolonging the negotiations would not improve the mood of the delegates. It is very easy to see that the aim of this tactic is to make the European representatives tired of the long wait, so that they either give up their position or, realizing that nothing can be achieved with the Chinese, break off the negotiations and leave Beijing. Both scenarios are advantageous to the Chinese government. They view any new treaty as a source of countless inconveniences, controls, and troubles, and any such request is met with great hostility by Chinese government officials. (...) They tried to create countless*

Contradictoriness of the European Public Law of Relations between States and Big-Power Foreign Policy at the Middle of the Nineteenth Century. In: Publikationsportal Europäische Friedensverträge, Institut für Europäische Geschichte, Mainz, 2008, p. 47.; the original English and Japanese version of the Treaty can be found here:『締盟各國 条約類纂』東京 日就社, 1874. pp. 507-531.

[620] Cortazzi-Hoare-Brailey-Hotta: *The Revision of Japan's Early Commercial Treaties*. The Suntory Centre, Suntory and Toyota International Centres for Economics and Related Disciplines, London School of Economics and Political Science. Discussion Paper No. IS/99/377 November 1999. p. 14.

[621]『日本外交史』第二巻 Tokyo, 1970.; Luis Amadeo Hernandez: *The Japan-Mexico Treaty 1888 and the Most Favored Nation Clause in the Unequal Treaties*, Harvard Univ., 2010. p. 3.

[622] "*Gentle in manner, strong in action*" in Latin.

difficulties, even though they knew very well that our subjects are few in number and our trade with the Celestial Empire is insignificant, and that we did not want any special privileges. After the obstacles had been removed and the date for signing the treaty had been set, the Chinese representatives declared that they did not understand the sovereign's dual title of emperor and king, since in their opinion someone could be either an emperor or a king, but not both at the same time and separately. Furthermore, they stated that they were willing to grant the title of king, but nothing more. With this and other difficulties arising, it was feared that the delegation would have to remain in Beijing throughout the winter or leave without concluding the treaty. Finally, the English envoy, forcefully exerting his influence, had such an effect on the Chinese representatives that they reluctantly gave in and the treaty was signed."[623]

Most likely, due to their experience with the Chinese government, the Austro-Hungarian expedition was cautious. As soon as they departed from China for Japan, they immediately began corresponding with Harry Parkes about the treaty with Japan, sharing a draft with him. Parkes had already engaged with the Japanese government to facilitate the negotiations. Upon the delegation's arrival in Nagasaki, he assured them of a warm welcome and the treaty's swift conclusion.[624] This is evident from Parkes's letters to his wife:

„*Another task on my mind is the reception of the Austrian mission which may arrive any day from Peking.*"[625] „*The Austrian Mission will arrive tomorrow probably and they will be on my hands a good deal during their stay. I have persuaded the Japanese Government however to receive them in our old Legation, and I shall advise their coming up to Yedo at once.*"[626] „*I wrote you last on the 9th, just as I was surrounded with Austrians and had commenced the negotiation of their Treaty. I am glad to say that we advanced very rapidly in our work and signed it on the 18th, ten days after their arrival in Yeddo. Baron Petz was very desirous to sign if possible on that day, as it was the anniversary of their departure from Austria, and he can now say that within the year he has accomplished the principal work of his mission, in concluding his Treaties with Siam, China, and Japan. He now proceeds home by South America and has to make Treaties with several of the Republics there, but*

[623] Bernát Géza: *Keletázsiai utazás*. 1873. pp. 161-163. Translated by the author.
[624] ペーター・パンツァー『日本オーストリア関係史』創造社、昭和五十九年, p. 32.
[625] 1869. Aug. 23. F. V. Dickins: *The Life of Sir Harry Parkes*. Vol. II., London, Macmillan 1894., p. 123.
[626] 1869. Sept. 28. F. V. Dickins: *The Life of Sir Harry Parkes*. Vol. II., London, Macmillan 1894., p. 149.

this is simple work. At Peking it took them nine weeks to get their Treaty – accomplishing nothing more in the end than they have done in Japan. They have obtained nothing new here, nor did they seek for anything new, still the commencement of relations with a new country involves some consideration, and they might easily have lost as much time here as at Peking if their business had not been well managed for them. That it was so is very creditable to the Japanese, who, I think, have considerately tried to pay me a compliment by using despatch and making no difficulties. Siebold has been the chief assistant to the Austrians, and has helped them very much."[627]

Harry Parkes's assistance and mediation were acknowledged by the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister Friedrich Ferdinand von Beust in a warmly worded French letter written in Buda on January 18, 1871.[628] Beust wrote that Rear Admiral Baron Petz spoke very highly of Parkes's assistance and hospitality during the mission. Emperor Franz Joseph wished to reward him with one of the empire's highest decorations, but British law prevented public officials from accepting foreign honors. Instead, the Emperor sent a symbolic gift: a statue of Saint George on horseback slaying the dragon. The statue was intended both as a gesture of gratitude and as a compliment to Britain, since Saint George is described as the patron saint of the English nation. In the closing lines, Beust suggested that those who helped overcome Japanese "prejudice" and resistance to foreigners accomplished something even greater than the legendary feat of Saint George slaying the dragon. Although Parkes was not awarded, contemporary reports[629] reveal a request to award Knight's Crosses of the Order of Franz Joseph to three German individuals in Japan – the Consul General Eduard Zappe, the interpreter at the German mission Peter Kempermann, and the consul in Hyōgo, August Evers – based on a recommendation from Imperial-Royal Consul General Calice in 1872. Calice proposed the honors to recognize their outstanding services in supporting Austro-Hungarian diplomatic and consular activities in Japan, particularly around the time of the exchange of treaty ratifications (the exchange of instruments of ratification having taken place on 27 November 1871 in Shanghai during an East Asian voyage of the Austro-Hungarian frigate *Fasana*).

In addition to Harry Parkes's letters, the British mediation role is also documented in the memoirs of Algernon Bertram Mitford, the British diplomat who was Second Secretary

[627] 1869. Oct. 20. F. V. Dickins: *The Life of Sir Harry Parkes*. Vol. II., London, Macmillan 1894., p. 150.
[628] The letter is published in its original form here: F. V. Dickins: *The Life of Sir Harry Parkes*. Vol. II., London, Macmillan 1894., pp. 443-444.
[629] Nr. 69. Ministerrat, Wien, 12 Apr 1872.

to the British Legation in Japan, in which he wrote scathingly about the Austrian delegation to Japan in late 1869.

> "*Towards the end of 1869 there came an Austrian Mission to conclude a treaty with Japan. As usual we pulled the chestnuts out of the fire for them. The Mission was commended to our good offices and we had to dry-nurse them, put them up to the ropes, and furnish them with an interpreter. The head of the Mission was Admiral Petz, the hero of Lissa, a most interesting personality; the second in command, charged with the negotiation of the commercial details of the affair, was Baron Calice (...)*.[630]

The Second Secretary's snide remark underscores the position of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Japan at the time. The Monarchy functioned largely as a stooge or a secondary Trojan horse for the great powers who set foot in Japan, serving as a convenient tool for these powers to expand their interests and influence. It was not the Monarchy's own standing, but rather the efforts of the British minister and the influence of the Western powers that resulted in the unprecedentedly short negotiation period of just ten days. This culminated in the signing of the Treaty of Friendship (Amity), Commerce, and Navigation on the first anniversary of the expedition's departure, on 18 October 1869.[631]

Japanese illustration of Franz Joseph I., 1871 (福沢諭吉 訳『世界国尽　三』慶応義塾, 明治4)

The document was essentially the last unequal treaty concluded between a European power and Japan and marked a breakthrough in the treaty system. The most fundamental change was the expansion of the physical boundaries established by earlier treaties, as

[630] Redesdale, Algernon Bertram Freeman-Mitford, Baron: Memories. 1915. London Hutchinson, p. 500.
[631] Jónás-Szondy: *Diplomáciai lexikon „Japán és Magyarország között kötött fontosabb kétoldalú nemzetközi egyezmények*" Bp., Kulcsár Ny., 1947. See also: 1871 évi XXIX. Törvénycikk.

outlined in Article 3. This article stipulated that the cities of Yokohama, Hyogo, Osaka, Nagasaki, Niigata, Ebisuminato on the island of Sado, Hakodate, and Tokyo would be opened to Austro-Hungarian subjects and trade upon the treaty's entry into force. Among the listed ports, the inclusion of the port on the island of Sado was a novel addition to the existing treaty framework. Another significant element in Article 3 was the provision allowing foreigners greater freedom to travel within Japan than had been granted under previous treaties with the Great Powers. The movement of Austro-Hungarian citizens within Japan was generally restricted to a radius of 10 *ri*[632] from the town hall in the designated open ports. (Heavy fines were imposed on those who crossed these boundaries without permission, starting at 100 Mexican dollars and increasing to 250 Mexican dollars for repeat offenses.) Free travel for foreigners in Osaka and Tokyo was also introduced under the same article – a notable innovation, as such freedom had not been permitted previously. The treaty with the Monarchy also delineated the scope of authority for officials. Article 5 states the following: „*All questions in regard to rights, whether of property, or of person, arising between Austro-Hungarian citizens residing in Japan shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Imperial and Royal Authorities. In like manner the Japanese Authorities shall not interfere in any question which may arise between Austro-Hungarian citizens and the subjects of any other Treaty Power.*"[633] Article 5 further specifies that if a Japanese individual files a complaint or suit against an Austro-Hungarian citizen, the case shall be adjudicated by the Imperial and Royal authorities. Conversely, if an Austro-Hungarian subject files a complaint or suit against a Japanese individual, the Japanese authorities shall handle the matter. This is expanded upon in Article 6, which addresses extraterritoriality. It states that Austro-Hungarian subjects who commit crimes against Japanese nationals or citizens of other nations shall be tried before the Imperial and Royal Consular Offices and punished according to the laws of their own country. In earlier treaties, the extraterritoriality clauses were vague, specifying only that foreigners in the treaty ports would be tried by officials from their own country, with little guidance on disputes between foreigners. The 1869 Austro-Hungarian treaty with Japan resolved these issues, establishing that cases involving different foreign nationals – including those with Japanese claimants – would be handled by the respective courts of the foreigners involved. In addition to the above, the treaty differed from previous

[632] one *ri*=approx. 3.9 km

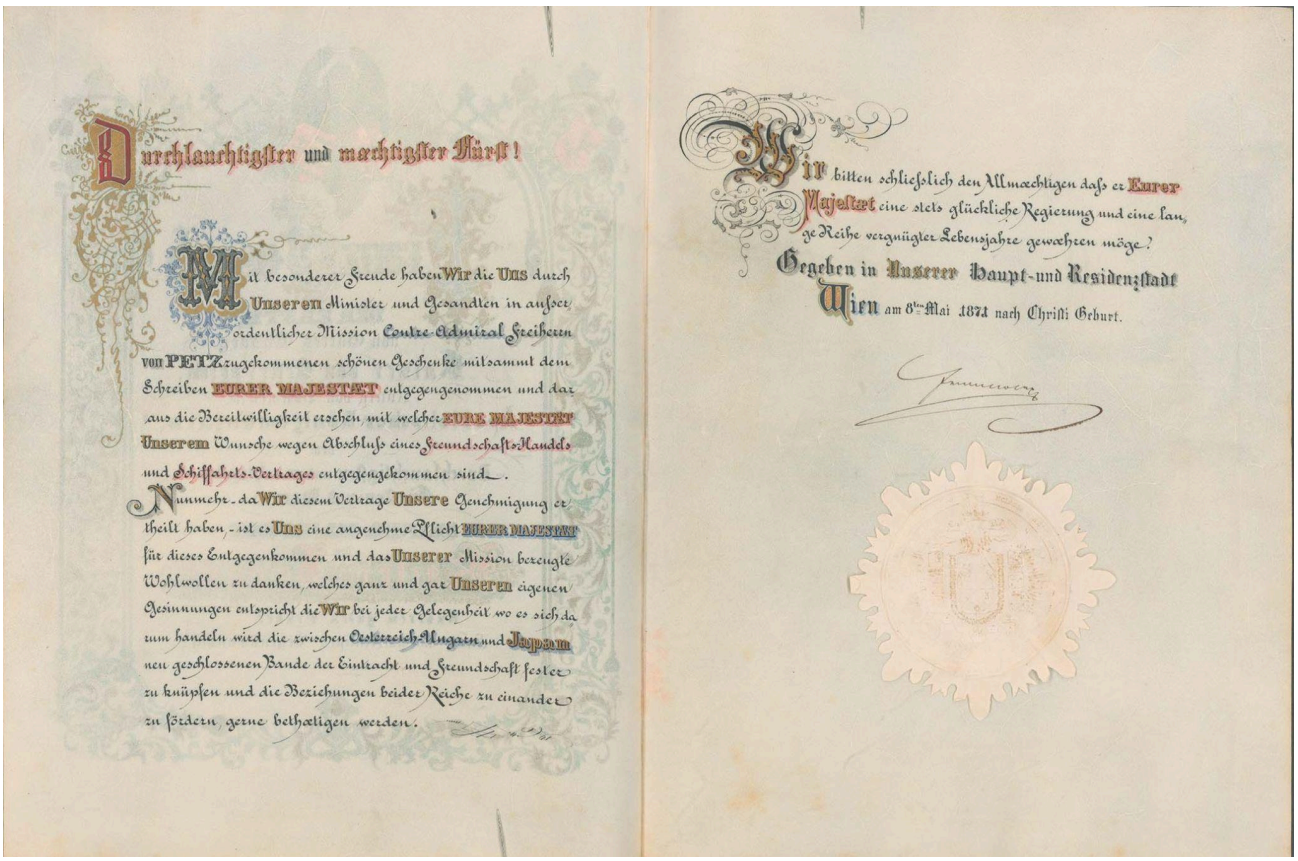
[633] *The World and Japan Database* (Project Leader: Akihiko Tanaka) Database of Japanese Politics and International Relations National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS); Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia (IASA), The University of Tokyo; https://worldjpn.net/documents/texts/pw/18691018.T1E.html (accessed: 2024 Dec.)

agreements between Japan and the Western powers by including several tariff changes that negatively impacted the Japanese treasury, addressing issues that had not been negotiated before. Article 9 tackled a long-standing problem: foreigners who brought goods into Japan's open ports and paid customs duties could now freely transport them to other Japanese open ports without incurring additional duties. This was not possible before, just as the provisions of Article 11 were new compared to previous treaties: „*Citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Empire shall be at liberty to ship all kinds of Japanese produce brought in one of the open ports in Japan to another open port in Japan without the payment of any duty*".[634] This would, in principle, have opened the way for Austro-Hungarian traders to the lucrative Japanese coastal trade, which had previously been exclusively in Japanese hands.[635] They also made provision for finance in Article 16, which states that: „*The Japanese Government engage to improve immediately the manufacture of Japanese coin. The Japanese principal Mint as well as the special offices to be organised at all of the open ports will then receive from foreigners and Japanese, without distinction of rank, foreign coins of all kinds as well as silver and gold bullion and will exchange the same for Japanese coin of the same intrinsic value, deducting a certain charge for coinage, the amount of which will be fixed by consent of the high contracting powers. Citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Japanese subjects may freely use foreign or Japanese coins in making payments to each other. Coins of all description (with the exception of Japanese copper coin), as well as foreign bullion in gold and silver may be exported from Japan.*" [636] Japan and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy were not, of course, significant trading partners for each other, which is not the reason why the changes brought about by the first treaty were significant. (The delegation held a small-scale trade exhibition featuring Austro-Hungarian products during their visit. Following the exhibition, The Japan Times' Overland Mail noted in its November 6 issue that the textiles and clothing on display were overpriced and unsuitable for the Japanese market. No such criticism was made of the alcoholic beverages or other goods. Austrian candles, meanwhile, were predicted to have strong market potential in Japan.)[637] As mentioned earlier, it was the great powers with a

[634] *The World and Japan Database* (Project Leader: Akihiko Tanaka) Database of Japanese Politics and International Relations National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS); Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia (IASA), The University of Tokyo; https://worldjpn.net/documents/texts/pw/18691018.T1E.html (accessed: 2024 Dec.)
[635] Michael R. Auslin: *Negotiating with Imperialism* – The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of Japanese Diplomacy. Harvard Univ. Press, 2004. p. 161.
[636] *The World and Japan Database* (Project Leader: TANAKA Akihiko) Database of Japanese Politics and International Relations National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS); Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia (IASA), The University of Tokyo; https://worldjpn.net/documents/texts/pw/18691018.T1E.html (accessed: 2024 Dec.)
[637] The Japan Times' Overland Mail, 6 November 1869.

foothold in Japan that benefited most from the treaty, as it was automatically extended to all 14 treaty states on the basis of the principle of most-favoured-nation treatment. This is where Britain's enthusiastic support for the treaty is understandable. Britain, France, and the other great powers were able to trade internally in Japan, all the treaty states benefited from the tariff arrangements, and foreigners in Osaka and Tokyo enjoyed more freedom of travel than ever before.

Franz Joseph
DER ERSTE,
von Gottes Gnaden
Kaiser von Oesterreich,
König von Böhmen etc.
Apostolischer König von Ungarn,
dem
Durchlauchtigsten und mächtigsten
Fürsten und Herrn:
SEINER MAJESTÄT
dem
Kaiser von Japan,
Unserem guten Bruder
Gruß und aufrichtigen Segenswunsch!



Durchlauchtigster und mächtigster Fürst!

Mit besonderer Freude haben Wir die Uns durch Unseren Minister und Gesandten in ausserordentlicher Mission Contre-Admiral Freiherrn von PETZ zugekommenen schönen Geschenke mitsammt dem Schreiben EURER MAJESTÄT entgegengenommen und daraus die Bereitwilligkeit ersehen, mit welcher EURE MAJESTÄT Unserem Wunsche wegen Abschluss eines Freundschafts-Handels und Schiffahrts-Vertrages entgegengekommen sind.

Nunmehr, da Wir diesem Vertrage Unsere Genehmigung ertheilt haben, ist es Uns eine angenehme Pflicht EURER MAJESTÄT für dieses Entgegenkommen und das Unserer Mission bezeugte Wohlwollen zu danken, welches ganz und gar Unseren eigenen Gesinnungen entspricht die Wir bei jeder Gelegenheit wo es sich darum handeln wird die zwischen Oesterreich-Ungarn und Japan neu geschlossenen Bande der Eintracht und Freundschaft fester zu knüpfen und die Beziehungen beider Reiche zu einander zu fördern, gerne bethätigen werden.

Wir bitten schliesslich den Allmächtigen dass er Eurer Majestät eine stets glückliche Regierung und eine lange Reihe vergnügter Lebensjahre gewähren möge.

Gegeben in Unserer Haupt- und Residenzstadt Wien am 8ten Mai 1871 nach Christi Geburt.

Letter of appreciation from Emperor-King Franz Joseph to Meiji Emperor for the conclusion of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce (1871) MOFA 304-000576[638]

Revision of the unequal treaties and Japan's second and third treaty with Austria-Hungary

Since the most pressing problems of the new Meiji government arose from these unequal treaties, Japanese leaders from 1868 onwards constantly sought to initiate a revision of them. Japan's push to revise the treaties and end consular (extraterritorial) jurisdiction was partly driven by national pride, but it was also a practical necessity, as these foreign legal privileges posed a major obstacle to the government's efforts to modernize and reorganize the country.[639] At the end of March 1869, Tomomi Iwakura wrote the following in a memorandum:

638

https://www.da.mofa.go.jp/DAS/meta/MetSearch.cgi?DEF_XSL=default&IS_KIND=detail&IS_SCH=META&IS_STYLE=default&IS_TYPE=meta&DB_ID=G9100001EXTERNAL&GRP_ID=&IS_SORT_FLD=&IS_SORT_KND=&IS_START=1&IS_TAG_S1=id&IS_CND_S1=ALL&IS_KEY_S1=R2016120914132079158&IS_NUMBER=50&ON_LYD=on&IS_EXTSCH=F99999999999999900000%2BL20161208195400723 01%2BL20161208195410724 06%2BL20161208195410724 14%2BL20161208195411724 26%2BR2016120914132079158&IS_DATA_TYPE=&IS_LYD_DIV=&LIST_TYPE=default&IS_ORG_ID=R2016120914132079158&CAT_XML_FLG=on (accessed: 2025 Apr.)

639 F. C. Jones: Extraterritoriality in Japan, 1931 Yale University Press, p. 68.

"*We must defend the independence of our empire by revising the trade treaties we have recently concluded with England, France, Holland, America, and other countries. At present, troops of foreign countries are stationed in our ports, and if foreigners commit acts contrary to our laws, they are punished by the authorities of their own countries. You could say that this is the greatest shame of our country*".[640]

By this time, the Japanese were already preparing to revise the unequal treaties and had decided to launch the Iwakura Mission (1871–1873). Meanwhile, the Austro-Hungarian corvette Fasana was en route to Japan with the ratified 1869 treaty to be delivered to the Japanese side. The Austro-Hungarian government was informed of Japan's intention to revise the agreement on 27 November 1871 via a memorandum from the Foreign Ministry.[641] Upon the Fasana's arrival in Japan, negotiations took place in which the Japanese attempted to amend the treaty. However, this was no longer possible, as it had already been accepted in 1869. Thus, the Japanese Emperor's final signature, dated January 10, 1872 (Meiji 4th year, December 1), was merely a formality for the treaty's entry into force with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The revision of the treaty system was rendered nearly impossible by the MFN principle mentioned earlier. Even if Japan managed to persuade a treaty state to relinquish the rights established in its agreement, another member of the treaty system could still claim those concessions. This meant the treaty system would remain intact as long as a single state insisted on its rights, effectively allowing just one party to block any revision attempts.[642]

Meanwhile, outside the Western sphere, Japan achieved a minor diplomatic triumph: it successfully negotiated an *equal treaty* with Mexico – an internationally recognized de jure sovereign state under international law – in 1888. Yet, this temporary success backfired: Britain and France invoked the MFN clause to secure the same rights for their citizens as those granted to Mexicans while retaining their existing treaty privileges. This reinforced Japan's unequal position. Thus, the MFN clause acted like quicksand, pulling Japan deeper into subordination.[643] It is understandable why preparing for the renegotiation of the treaties was such a monumental task for Japan, leading to delays until 1899, when the issue was finally resolved. More precisely, Japan regained full

[640] Letter to Sanjō, In: Iwakura kō jikki, II. (Tokyo: Iwakura kō Kyūseki Hozonkai, 1927.) pp. 698-699. (translated by the author)
[641] ペーター・パンツァー『日本オーストリア関係史』創造社、昭和五十九年, p. 37.
[642] Luis Amadeo Hernandez: *The Japan-Mexico Treaty 1888 and the Most Favored Nation Clause in the Unequal Treaties*, Harvard Univ., 2010. pp. 3-4.
[643] Jacques E. C. Hymans: *Why Recognize? Explaining Victorian Britain's Decision to Recognize the Sovereignty of Imperial Japan.* In: Korean Journal of International Studies 2014, vol.12, Special Issue p. 56. DOI: 10.14731/kjis.2014.05.12.S.49

control over its customs policies in 1911. Prior to that, a fixed 10% tariff on key imports had been in place for over a decade and was uniformly applied across all treaty agreements.

Woodblock print 'On the Belly of Courage the Hand of Anxiety' c. 1864

During the Iwakura mission's European tour, Iwakura met with Gyula Andrássy, the joint Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, in Vienna on 5 June 1873, in an attempt to renegotiate the treaty with the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.[644] However, the meeting ended in failure. The diplomatic visit concluded with a banquet at Schönbrunn on 15 June.[645] The Japanese delegation then raised concerns regarding tariffs and extraterritoriality, but Vienna dismissed these, having already aligned its stance with France and England on the matter. Andrássy affirmed that the Monarchy's relations with Japan were excellent and that

[644] ペーター・パンツァー『日本オーストリア関係史』創造社、昭和五十九年, p. 45.

[645] A Japanese source mentions that Empress Elisabeth of Austria (Sissi) was also present at the Schönbrunn dinner (the source notes the date as 8 July), with Tomomi Iwakura, the head of the mission, seated beside her. Although Sissi attended the dinner reluctantly, she later remarked that she had "*lost her appetite at the thought of eating with pagans*". http://homepage3.nifty.com/kosi/wien/atuhime.html (accessed: 2012. Dec.; dead link as of 2024)

the government had no intention of altering them.[646] After years of fruitless efforts, the Japanese, filled with optimism, convened a joint meeting of the great powers in Tokyo in 1882, attended by the Monarchy's envoy, Maximilian Ritter Hoffer von Hoffenfels.[647] Once again, the Japanese pressed for changes to tariffs and consular jurisdiction, but the great powers remained unyielding. A later round of negotiations took place the following year, yet with no progress achieved, the Japanese shifted their strategy to negotiating with their treaty partners individually for revisions. During Shigenobu Ōkuma's tenure as Foreign Minister, a proposal was submitted on 30 December 1888 through the Monarchy's legation representative, Baron Biegeleben, and formally presented to the Austro-Hungarian side in February of the following year by Japan's ambassador in Vienna, Ujitaka Toda. Japan had strong reasons to approach the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy first, as its treaty served as the template for negotiations, being the most recent in the series of unequal treaties with the West. In March, Deputy Foreign Minister László Szőgyényi-Marich sent a letter to Toda firmly rejecting any treaty revision. Meanwhile, Japan realized that since the Monarchy's foreign policy was increasingly aligned with Germany, it would be more strategic to initiate negotiations with the Germans instead. Ōkuma then instructed Toda to inform the Austro-Hungarian side of this and convey his personal message: "*In view of our special relations with Austria-Hungary and Germany, Japan would like to expedite the revision of the treaty with Austria-Hungary*". [648] Consequently, the Austro-Hungarian side agreed to open negotiations, but due to various obstacles and the Monarchy's procrastination, meaningful discussions were delayed for an extended period. In a July report to Ōkuma, Toda attributed the delay to the prolonged negotiations between the Hungarian and Austrian authorities. By September, the Monarchy informed the Japanese that preliminary talks had begun between the relevant ministries. However, changes in envoys further slowed the process. Valuable years were lost for Japan before progress was finally made. Using a variety of strategies, the Japanese succeeded in negotiating a settlement with the British in 1894, recognizing that previous failures had been due to British resistance. They hoped that persuading Britain would encourage other great powers to follow. Undoubtedly, British attitudes toward Japan had shifted, influenced by Russian expansion in East Asia

[646] Szerdahelyi István: *Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia és a Japán Császárság között 1869. október 18-án kötött kereskedelmi szerződés*. In: Tanulmányok a magyar-japán kapcsolatok történetéből, Bp., ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2009., pp. 38-39.

[647] The Hungarian Minister of Commerce was authorised at the 15th session of the Council of Ministers held on 15 April 1881 to give his consent on behalf of the Hungarian government to the negotiations of the Treaty of Friendship and Navigation between Japan and the European powers.

[648] 条約改正関係第三巻三二六文書; In:『日本外交史』第二巻 Tokyo, 1970. Translated by the Author.

and the construction of the Siberian Railway.[649] In September 1895, the Monarchy appointed Christoph von Wydenbruck as its new envoy, granting him authority to open negotiations. He expressed his frustration over Japan's failure to appoint a new permanent envoy to Vienna. The newly designated Japanese envoy arrived in Vienna in January 1896 and met Foreign Minister Goluchowski on the 19th. The Austro-Hungarian side, however, preferred to wait for the Japanese-German treaty to be finalized, which occurred in April 1896. Only after that did they present their formal proposal for treaty revision to the Japanese. Negotiations were still delayed as the Hungarian and Austrian sides needed to have the proposal approved separately by their respective Parliaments. From a trade perspective, the Hungarian side anticipated growing demand in Japan for a range of industrial products. During discussions in the Hungarian Parliament in 1896, several goods were identified as particularly promising export commodities, including iron products (such as nails, pipes, and rails), tin goods, window glass, leather, steam motor coaches, machinery – especially dynamo-electric machines – and paper.[650] These products were considered important because their trade volume was expected to increase significantly in the future. The interested members of the Hungarian Parliament were also informed that Hungary was set to benefit from specific tariff concessions granted by Japan under a Supplementary Agreement. Of particular importance was the duty-free importation of Hungarian horses into Japan. Additional concessions included favorable tariff rates on tinware, bentwood furniture, and glassware, measures that were expected to support and promote Hungarian domestic industry.[651] Interesting details of the negotiations can be found in the notes from the 26th meeting of the Hungarian Council of Ministers on 01.07.1897. At the meeting, the Hungarian Minister of Trade presented the outcome of the negotiations, stating that "*the agreement would be concluded by waiving our right to exercise consular jurisdiction in Japan*". He also noted that "*the Japanese Government, citing its principled stance, was willing to conclude a tariff contract only for goods imported into Japan valued at a minimum of 50,000,000 yen per year, which was not the case with our trade volume, and therefore refused to enter into a tariff agreement with us*". The minister reported that Vienna had even attempted to propose a tariff arrangement, which the Japanese refused to accept. He explained, "*The Customs and Trade Conference held in Vienna on 26 May of this year made a proposal, which the Japanese delegate accepted*

[649] Luis Amadeo Hernandez: *The Japan-Mexico Treaty 1888 and the Most Favored Nation Clause in the Unequal Treaties*, Harvard Univ., 2010. p. 25.
[650] Képviselőházi Irományok, XII. kötet, 1896. 375. sz., p. 201.
[651] Képviselőházi Irományok, XII. kötet, 1896. 375. sz., p. 206.

only ad referendum. This proposal suggested that the tariff concessions we required for certain goods be outlined in a secret supplementary agreement, to be signed later, but in any case, before the exchange of documents of approval for the main treaty". The revised, second Commerce and Navigation treaty was finally signed on 5 December 1897 (Meiji 30) in Vienna by Foreign Minister Goluchowski and Envoy Takahira.[652] With the new treaty with Austria-Hungary, Japan was able to bring to a close a tiresome diplomatic tussle with the Western powers that had lasted for some thirty years. The text of the treaty, which can be read in Hungarian in Article XXXII. 1898, begins as follows:

> "*His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, King of Bohemia, etc., and the Apostolic King of Hungary, and His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, desirous of maintaining the amicable relations happily existing between them by developing and strengthening the connections between their countries, and convinced that this goal can best be achieved by revising the treaty currently in force between their nations, have resolved that this revision should be conducted on the basis of mutual equity and shared interests. To this end, they have appointed their Plenipotentiaries, namely:* [the names of the Plenipotentiaries follow]*, who, having mutually communicated their full powers, found to be in good and due form, have concluded this Treaty of Commerce and Navigation.*"[653]

The expulsion of the 'Russian spider'. A Hungarian hussar can be seen in the picture, with the inscription 匈牙利 [hangarí] on his uniform (外交的滑稽露蛛蜘退治の図)

[652]『日本外交史』第二巻 Tokyo, 1970.
[653] all related citations from this treaty are translated by the author, based on the Hungarian version (1898. XXXII. Tc.)

One of the treaty's key provisions was Article XXII, which stated: "*From the date this Treaty enters into force in its entirety, the Treaty concluded on October 18, 1869, corresponding to the fourteenth day of the ninth month of the second year of Meiji, along with all prior agreements and conventions between the High Contracting Parties, shall be superseded. Consequently, the jurisdiction exercised in Japan by the Austro-Hungarian Consular Courts, as well as the exceptional privileges, facilities, and immunities previously enjoyed by Austrian or Hungarian subjects in matters of jurisdiction, shall be abolished in full, effective immediately and without the need for any special notice. Henceforth, Austrians and Hungarians shall be subject to the jurisdiction of Japanese Courts.*" Simultaneously, as an addition to Article XXII of the Closing Protocol, it granted preferential treatment for cases already pending at the time the treaty was signed: „*It is agreed that, although Austro-Hungarian consular jurisdiction in Japan will automatically cease upon the full entry into force of the Treaty of Commerce and Navigation signed today, such jurisdiction shall remain in effect for all matters pending at that time until their final resolution.*" The Treaty's entry into force was stipulated in Article XXIII: „*With the exception of Article XVIII, this Treaty shall take effect one year after the Government of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan notifies the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy of its desire for the Treaty to enter into force, but not before July 17, 1899. The Treaty shall remain in effect for twelve years from the date it comes into force.*" For details on travel within the country, freedom of movement, and the rights of foreigners, we shall refer to Article I.: „*The subjects of each High Contracting Party shall have full liberty to visit any location within the territories of the other Party and to travel or reside freely within those territories, enjoying full and unlimited protection of their persons and property. They shall have free and unhindered access to the courts to seek and defend their rights, with the same freedom as nationals to choose and employ prosecutors, lawyers, and agents for such purposes. In all other matters related to the administration of justice, they shall enjoy the same rights and privileges as nationals.*" On the issue of trade between the two empires – although it had not been fully exploited due to a lack of capital, a general lack of interest, and insufficient knowledge of the Japanese markets – Article III provided as follows: „*Trade and navigation between the territories of the High Contracting Parties shall be entirely free. The subjects of each High Contracting Party may, in any location within the territories of the other Party, engage in both large and small-scale trade, either personally or through agents, independently or in partnership with foreigners or locals, in all goods, products, and manufactures that may be*

marketed. They may own, rent, and occupy houses, business premises, factories, and warehouses, and may lease land for the purpose of settling or conducting industry or trade, provided that they comply with the laws of the country and adhere to local customs and police regulations, in the same manner as nationals." On one of the most pressing issues for the Japanese, namely customs duties, Articles V and VI provided: „*In the case of importation into the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, no higher or different duties shall be levied on articles produced or manufactured in the territory of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan or coming from any place, than those imposed on similar articles produced or manufactured in any other foreign country. Similarly, on importation into the territory of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, no higher or different duties shall be levied on articles produced or manufactured in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and coming from any place than those imposed on similar articles from any other foreign country. (...) No customs duty or charge shall be levied in the territories of each High Contracting Party on the exportation of goods ordered into the territories of the other Party, except those duties or charges now or hereafter levied on the exportation of goods ordered into any other foreign country. Furthermore, no prohibition shall be imposed on the exportation of goods from the territory of one Contracting Party to the other Party that would not also apply to the exportation of goods to any other country.*" Finally, Article XX, concerning the abolition of concession areas within cities, deserves attention: „*The various foreign settlements in Japan shall be incorporated into their respective Japanese municipalities and will henceforth be part of Japan's system of public administration.*"

Until the actual entry into force of the treaties, the minutes of the Hungarian Council of Ministers reveal further diplomatic negotiations. According to the minutes of the 28th meeting on 13 July 1898, prior to the treaty's entry into force, the Japanese sought assurances on certain practical matters: „*the Government of Japan has firmly declared (...) that it does not consider it permissible to make the entry into force of the treaty relations it has independently established with each foreign country contingent upon the consent of the Monarchy or any other foreign state.*"[654] At the same meeting, it is revealed that the joint Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister insisted on maintaining consular jurisdiction in Japan: „*if a contracting state exercises consular jurisdiction in Japan beyond 17 July 1899, our 1899 treaty with Japan shall remain in force for as long as such consular jurisdiction is exercised.*"[655] Toshiki Kawashima points out the enormous importance of the second treaty

[654] translated from Hungarian by the author
[655] translated from Hungarian by the author

between Japan and Austria-Hungary, concluded in 1897, arguing that it was the first treaty based on the *conventional-tariff network*[656] concluded between Austria-Hungary and Japan. Although it caused some internal disagreement within the Japanese government, it eventually marked Japan's first explicit reciprocal tariff agreement with a European country, in which both countries mutually granted each other equal tariff concessions. Japan's envoy, Kogorō Takahira, negotiated with Austria-Hungary for a trade agreement based on reciprocal tariff reductions. After lengthy negotiations and initial resistance, Austria-Hungary eventually agreed to grant Japan conventional (lower) tariffs, shifting from a non-reciprocal to a reciprocal system. This change was influenced by Takahira's diplomatic efforts and Austria-Hungary's concern about maintaining competitive trade relations with other countries.[657]

The third treaty,[658] concluded on 28 October 1912, was a bilateral treaty that was equal in all respects. New commercial treaties signed with countries such as Britain and France (effective in 1911–12), together with revised general tariffs, allowed Japan to fully join the conventional-tariff network. Unlike earlier agreements, these treaties included both the dual-tariff system and mutual most-favoured-nation (MFN) clauses, enabling reciprocal tariff concessions. As a result, Japan became integrated into a broader, interconnected international trade system linking many countries through complex commercial treaties.[659] Nevertheless, the path to the Austro-Hungarian treaty was bumpy, as evidenced by an item on the agenda of the 12th meeting of the Hungarian Council of Ministers on 15 June 1911: „*Authorising the joint foreign minister to block diplomatic negotiations on a trade and shipping treaty with Japan*". A key issue in the negotiations of the third treaty was the customs agreement. To facilitate its conclusion, the Austro-Hungarian side submitted

[656] The conventional-tariff network was a late 19th- and early 20th-century international trade system in which countries coordinated tariff reductions through a web of bilateral trade treaties. It was built on two main principles. First, the *dual-tariff system* meant that each country had two import tax rates: a higher general tariff for countries without a trade agreement, and a lower conventional tariff for countries that had signed a treaty. These treaties involved reciprocal concessions, where countries agreed to reduce tariffs on goods important to each other's exports. Second, the *most-favoured-nation (MFN)* clause ensured that any tariff reduction granted to one treaty partner had to be extended to other countries with MFN status, spreading the benefits across the system. Together, these mechanisms formed a network of interconnected trade agreements that encouraged widespread tariff reductions, expanded international trade, and made the system increasingly stable and difficult to dismantle.

[657] Toshiki Kawashima: *A European political-economic space that embraced Japan: the international context of the conventional-tariff network, ca.1892–1914*. In: European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire, 25:3-4, 2018. p. 620., DOI: 10.1080/13507486.2018.1442419

[658] 1913. XIX. Törvénycikk; ペーター・パンツァー『日本オーストリア関係史』創造社、昭和五十九年, p. 75.

[659] Toshiki Kawashima: *A European political-economic space that embraced Japan: the international context of the conventional-tariff network, ca.1892–1914*. In: European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire, 25:3-4, 2018. p. 623., DOI: 10.1080/13507486.2018.1442419

statistics[660] on Austro-Hungarian-Japanese foreign trade to the Japanese delegation. The figures, however, were entirely inconsistent with the Japanese data, which were otherwise meticulously maintained. This discrepancy may have arisen because the Monarchy did not keep accurate records, as it aggregated Japanese trade data with that of China, Switzerland, and France. While there is no evidence to suggest that the Japanese considered the submitted statistics falsified, it is suspected that the authenticity of the Austro-Hungarian document, used as a basis for the negotiations, was questioned in Japan. Meanwhile, time was running out, and there were concerns that the treaty might expire before a new one could be signed. The Monarchy, however, attempted to delay proceedings, relying on stalling tactics that had proven effective thus far.[661] Their primary aim was to observe the agreements other great powers would finalize with Japan. Despite repeated negotiations, the Japanese steadfastly rejected the tariff agreement proposed by the Austro-Hungarian side. The debate ultimately centered on the final version of the Austro-Hungarian tariff proposal, which consisted of two key elements: a request from the Austrian Ministry of Trade to lower import duties on imitation paper[662] produced in Austria and a similar request from the Hungarian side to reduce import duties on filament light bulbs manufactured in Hungary. It is known that when the three major Japanese paper companies – Oji Paper, Kyushu Paper, and Fuji Paper – learned that the Austro-Hungarian treaty might include a tax rate on Japanese imitation paper, they quickly reacted collectively. Acting as representatives of the National Paper Manufacturers, they submitted a protest letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1911. The effectiveness of this action is unclear, but eventually, the Japanese government began to refuse to include a tax rate

[660] 島田昌幸『東京のフランケンシュタイン:あるオーストリア=ハンガリー外交官の東京駐在 (1911-13)』(2.) In: 学習院高等科紀要, 第5号, 2007.7.; p. 90.

[661] The greatest obstacle to concluding treaties between Japan and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was the dual state structure of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which required agreements to be approved by both parliaments. Although it was the Foreign Minister's responsibility to draft and finalize foreign economic treaties, he could only act on significant matters with the consent of both governments. Treaties became legally binding only after being ratified by the legislatures of both countries. The Monarchy often exploited this procedural complexity to stall for time, allowing it to incorporate advantages secured by other great powers into the draft treaty. This tactic was intended to secure a stronger negotiating position. However, Japan was emerging as an increasingly powerful economic and political player, enabling it to negotiate on more equal terms and resist being pressured into agreements that did not serve its interests.

[662] A type of *washi* (Japanese paper) produced by the Japanese Ministry of Finance was showcased at the Paris World Expo, where it earned high acclaim. Austrian papermakers, impressed by its quality, created a similar product called "Simili Japanese Vellum", or "imitation Japanese paper" using sulfite pulp in 1896. This imitation paper was exported to Japan as a cheaper alternative to authentic *washi*. Kiyoaki Iida: *Japanese paper Industry after the Meiji Restoration: How technology helped its growth – Part 6: WASHI industry and environmental concern*, p. 4. https://www.japantappi.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/EF2-part6.pdf (accessed: 2024 Dec.); The story of how Austrian imitation Japanese paper may have originated can be traced back to Hugo Ströhl, a Viennese drawing teacher known for his ornamental print designs. According to a Hungarian press article from 1893, he was commissioned by Japan to create sketches for paper goods intended for export and marketed as authentic Japanese products. See: Grafikai Szemle, 1893-04-20.

agreement for paper products in its negotiations with Austria-Hungary.[663] During the negotiations, the Austro-Hungarian delegation, recognizing Japan's steadfast refusal to concede, was ultimately forced to withdraw these demands. The Austro-Hungarian representative in Tokyo, who had been actively involved in the negotiations, informed the Japanese side that they had “temporarily abandoned” these requests as a gesture of goodwill, friendship, and a willingness to compromise. Yet, the tone of his message carried an air of condescension, reflecting the lingering belief that Japan could still be subjected to the unequal trade practices of the past – an assumption increasingly out of touch with Japan's growing economic strength and assertiveness in international negotiations. During the negotiations, Austrian diplomat Georg von und zu Franckenstein[664] described how difficult he found it to read Japanese diplomats. He lamented their ‘secrecy’ and the inscrutable ‘Japanese smile’. He even likened the Japanese Foreign Minister’s ability to conceal his thoughts to "*a raven spewing ink*" – a vivid image likely intended to suggest deliberate and impenetrable obfuscation.[665] The third treaty was concluded in 1912 after lengthy negotiations. From a trade perspective, the Hungarian side's expectations regarding the treaty can be discerned from a 1913 report issued by the Joint Committee on Public Law and Legislation and the Committee on Economics and Transportation of the Hungarian Parliament concerning the ratification of the treaty concluded with Japan. The report noted that several Hungarian products had not yet entered the Japanese market but were considered to have significant export potential. These included textile products, machine belts, sole and upper leather, hardware and machinery, champagne, and confectionery products. According to the report, Japan continued to import substantial quantities of such goods, suggesting promising opportunities for future Hungarian exports.[666]

[663] 全国製紙業者総代「墺洪国政府ト条約御改正ニ付稟請」1911年 9月（日本製紙連合会『明治44 年秋季総会決議録，付録書類』1911年，「大正元 年秋季総会決議録」『自明治44年大正 10年総会 決議録』1911年一1921年

[664] Georg Albert Maria Freiherr von und zu Franckenstein (1878–1953), later known as Sir George Franckenstein, was a distinguished Austrian diplomat and a member of the Franckenstein noble family. Born in Dresden, Saxony, he was the son of Karl von und zu Franckenstein, an Austro-Hungarian diplomat, and Elma, Countess von Schönborn-Wiesentheid.

[665] HHStA, AR, F. 23, K. 48. Z. 35169; Franckenstein to Foreign Ministry, 23 May 1912; AR, F. 23, K. 48.Z. 41964, report No. 17-B, Franckentein to Berchtold, 24 May 1912.

[666] Főrendiházi Irományok, 1913, 609. sz., p. 516.

Export commodity	Unit	Japanese Customs Tariff (1906, Yen)	Japanese Customs Tariff (1910, Yen)	Change in % from 1906 to 1910
Bone glue	600 gr (100 kin)	2,58	2,70	104,65%
Toilet soap	600 gr (100 kin)	24,70	28,60	115,78%
Incandescent bulb (with carbon filament, 32-candlepower)	100 pieces	5,80	8,90	153,44%
Incandescent bulb (other type)	100 pieces	10,20	21	205,88%
Incandescent bulb (with metal-filament)	-	-	40% of the whole	

Changes in Japanese customs tariffs between 1906 and 1910 for three of Hungary's major export commodities[667]

Further assessments in 1913 concluded that Hungary was unlikely to suffer negative effects from Japan's new customs system. Instead, they expected Hungarian foreign trade with Japan to expand, partly because of tariff reductions on a range of imported goods. Notable reductions included tariffs on perfumed soap, iron and steel sheets, wrapping paper, linen yarn and textiles, cotton fabrics, champagne, ordinary soap, butter, finished tanned hides, and dynamos. However, the new tariff system also imposed substantially higher duties (20–260%) on several important Hungarian exports, including malt, fine soap, incandescent light bulbs, and printing paper. Despite these increases, the overall assessment remained optimistic. It identified promising opportunities for Hungarian exports in sectors where Japan depended on imports or lacked competitive domestic production, particularly soap, paper, leather products (machine drive belts, sole leather, and upper leather), champagne, and confectionery. The report suggested that the Hungarian textile industry could compete successfully in the Japanese market. The final conclusion was that the new Japanese tariff system would not significantly harm Hungarian exports, except for paper products, and that it still offered favorable opportunities for expanding trade in several industries.[668]

Masayuki Shimada, a researcher specializing in the third Austro-Hungarian-Japanese treaty, notes the difficulty in explaining Austria-Hungary's insistence on a customs agreement, especially in light of the negligible volume of foreign trade involved.[669] This stance might be attributed to the relative success of earlier treaties

[667] Országgyűlési Főrendi Irományok, 1910. 600. sz. p. 425.
[668] Közgazdasági értesítő 1913. 8. évf. 2. Kötet., pp. 106-111.
[669] 島田昌幸『東京のフランケンシュタイン:あるオーストリア=ハンガリー外交官の東京駐在 (1911-13)』(2.) In: 学習院高等科紀要, 第5号, 2007.7.; p. 102.

with Japan, which – merely by being concluded – had bolstered Austria-Hungary's pride as a ‘talmudic great power’. Yet, as Japan grew stronger, this approach was no longer sustainable, and the Monarchy could no longer leverage real or imagined foreign trade goals to assert its status as a great power. Moreover, no tangible progress was ever made toward achieving meaningful trade objectives. Masayuki Shimada summarized Austria-Hungary's position in Asia and toward Japan after 1912 as follows: as a self-declared "great power", the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy sought to assert its status by joining the imperial scramble in the region. However, its lack of economic and military resources hindered any meaningful participation. It was even excluded from key forums such as the Six Power Consortium (sometimes referred to as the “Good Offices” group), a diplomatic alliance of Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Japan, and the United States formed to coordinate Western interests and manage spheres of influence in China after the Boxer Rebellion. Austria-Hungary’s exclusion from this group reflected its marginal role in East Asia and limited imperial power.[670]

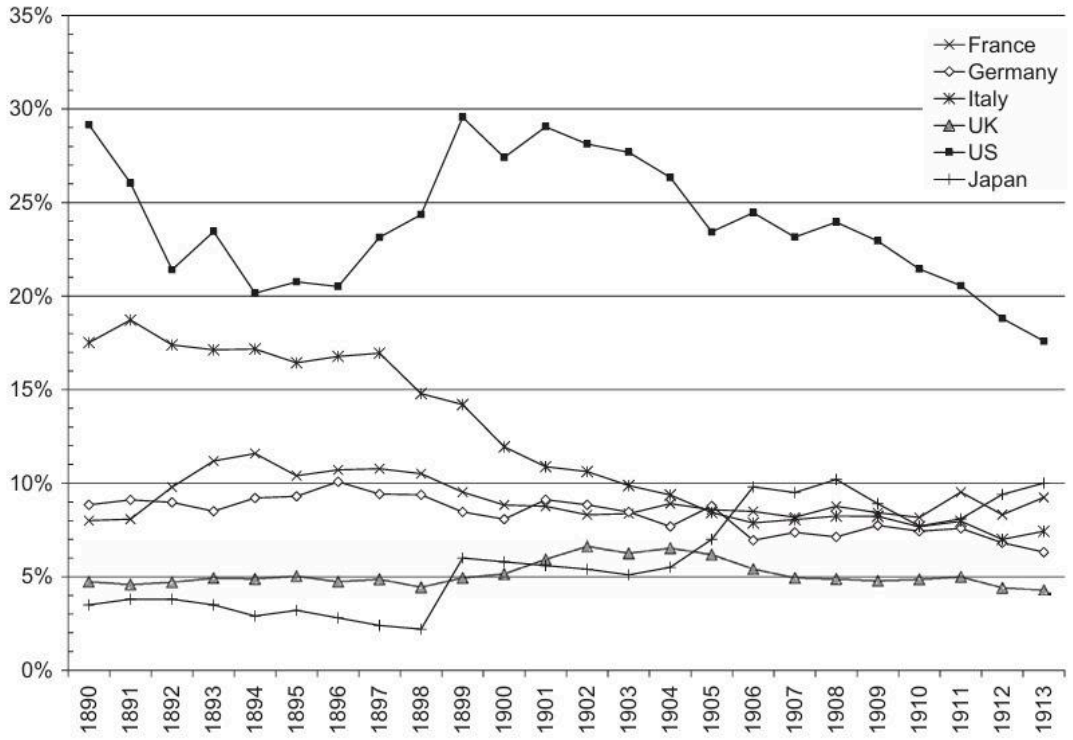


Table of average tariff rates of the western countries and Japan, 1890–1913. (Based on: 山澤 逸平, 山本 有造『貿易と国際収支』1979; U.S. Bureau of the Census historical statistics)

[670] 島田昌幸『オーストリア＝ハンガリー帝国外務省の東アジア国際政治認識（一九〇九～一九一四）』In: 学習院高等科, 2023, p. 98.

Foreign trade between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Japan

After reviewing the three treaties discussed above, let us now examine the foreign trade relations between the two countries. Unfortunately, early export and import statistics are rarely available: one of the earliest such records is from 1873. In a document titled *Monthly Return of Exporters Paying Ad Valorem Duties, Yokohama, March 1873* we find lacquer goods listed as 17 cases with a declared value of 70 yen, and 'curio' as 10 cases with a declared value of 606 yen.[671] The period following the first treaty (1869) was initially characterized by a predominance of imports to the Monarchy, with minimal export value. From Japan, the Monarchy primarily imported Noshi silk and silk waste, while Japan regularly purchased Hungarian horses (Arabian-blooded, so-called 'improver/corrector' stallions) from Hungarian stud farms. Two years after the establishment of the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture and Trade, in 1883 (Meiji 16), 32 Hungarian horses were purchased and placed in various Japanese breeding farms in the Tōhoku area.[672] (Heinrich Siebold, the secretary of the consulate in Yokohama, helped broker the deal.) The Japanese horse purchases are mentioned in the Vasárnapi Újság in connection with the visit of the King of Siam to Bábolna in 1897:

> "*To characterize the value and uniqueness of the Arabian bloodline breeding at Bábolna, it is important to note that Bábolna is a major and highly sought-after source for improving Arabian bloodstock in foreign countries. On this occasion, the King of Siam was presented with four Arab stallions and four mares, which had recently been purchased by the Japanese government at Bábolna. These horses were then sent to Paris before being shipped by sea to Japan. In response to a question from the Emperor of Siam about whether the Emperor of Japan would use these noble animals in a carriage, Minister Darányi explained that the horses were being sent for breeding purposes. He also mentioned that the Japanese government had previously purchased a small group of breeding horses from Bábolna, which were used for breeding stock distribution. The excellence of the horses bred from Bábolna blood, which so outclassed other horses in the Japanese-Chinese war, led the Japanese government to purchase more breeding stock from Bábolna.*"[673]

[671] 『大日本各港輸出入物品表』明治六年第三月分
[672] 伊澤信一『馬』東京、牧書房、昭和十七年, p. 24.
[673] Vasárnapi Újság, 44. évf. 29. szám, 1897. július 18. Translated by the author.

As outlined by Shigeki Okazaki, during the Sino-Japanese War, many native Japanese horses requisitioned for military service – often drawn from imperial pastures – were undersized and of poor quality, making them unsuitable for military use. In response, the Japanese government established the Horse Survey Committee by imperial decree on June 18, 1895. Comprising officials from the Ministries of the Army, Agriculture, and Commerce and Industry, along with local experts, the committee formulated improvement policies, including height standards for riding and pack horses. Measures were introduced to import high-quality stallions, establish breeding farms, and create stallion stations to strengthen local stock. These horse improvement efforts were gaining momentum when the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War on April 7, 1904, prompted further developments. (At first, the hybrids produced by a single crossbreeding of local mares with foreign stallions showed little improvement in physique or capability. Moreover, since it took six years for a horse to mature for military use, these improvement efforts did not yield immediate results. The scale of this breeding program involved about 0.1% of Japan's horse population – approximately 1,500 horses. The Japanese developed a 20-year plan modeled on France's horse policy, aiming to produce over 320,000 improved horses – approximately one-fifth of the total horse population of 1.5 million expected after twenty years.)[674] In line with the horse breeding program, in 1888 (Meiji 21), the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture and Trade commissioned a very detailed study of Hungarian horse breeding.[675] From the records of the Bábolna stud farm, we know that in 1889 the Japanese government purchased three Shagya-Arabian[676] breeding stallions at the highest average price of the time, 2,333 Forints.[677] It is difficult to determine exactly how many times the Japanese purchased horses from the state stud farms, but it is a fact that in 1904, a photograph was taken at the Hungarian State Royal Stud Farm in Mezőhegyes.[678] During another visit to Mezőhegyes in 1906, the Japanese purchased one large Nonius, two North Star, two Gidran, and one Furioso stallion, along with an English half-breed

[674] 岡崎滋樹『近代日本の畜産「雑種化黄金期」と馬匹改良―1896～1935年の馬政／畜』In:『立命館経済学』第63巻, 第1号 2014年5月, pp. 51-54.

[675] 『明治欧米見聞録集成』第13巻、欧米巡回取調書6、ゆまに書房、昭和六十二年

[676] The Shagya-Arabian is a recognized horse breed developed in the 19th-century Austro-Hungarian Empire. Bred at state studs like Bábolna and Mezőhegyes, it was designed as a cavalry horse combining the Arabian's elegance and endurance with greater size and versatility. The breed is valued for its stamina, intelligence, and adaptability across disciplines such as dressage, eventing, and endurance riding.

[677] *Kimutatás a méntelepeknek és idegen kormányoknak eladott országos fedezőménekről és átlagáraikról*. Cited by: Dr. Hecker Walter: *A Bábolnai Arab Ménes*. Magyarországi Arablótenyésztők Egyesülete, 2014., p. 90.

[678] Mezőhegyesi Helytörténeti Gyűjtemény, Photo Archives. Published on: https://www.menesbirtok.hu/a-meidzsi-reform-es-a-magyar-kiralyi-allami-menesbirtok/ (accessed: 2019. January, a dead link by now)

stallion offered by a private individual. They paid 30,000 krones for the five state stallions and 3,000 krones for the horse offered by the private individual. A Hungarian Council of Ministers' Minute from September 1907 also attests to the horse purchases. In the document, Japanese agricultural experts were nominated for honors for "*their contributions to Hungary's agriculture through the annual horse purchases*". One of the honorees was Sōsuke Niiyama (1856-1930), a veterinarian and official of the Japanese Horse Bureau.[679] In 1908, a German expert named Ernst Voigts visited Bábolna. He had been sent by the German Imperial Colonial Office to purchase stallions for improving horse breeding in their South West African colony. In a letter dated August 1908, he noted that the Japanese government had been buying stallions and mares from Bábolna and Mezőhegyes annually for some time. According to him, in 1907, 20 Anglo-Arabian stallions were purchased for 121,000 krones, and in 1908, 10 yellow stallions (light-coated horses, likely palominos) were also acquired.[680] High-ranking Japanese officials were still coming to Hungary to buy horses in 1910, as evidenced by the diary of Shizuo Matsuoka, military attaché at the Japanese Embassy in Vienna. Matsuoka met Kenkichi Tange (1858-1929) and Shigeyuki Nitahara (1862-1925) by chance at the Hotel Hungária on 17 May 1910, while en route to Budapest. (Tange was no stranger to horse-purchasing activities: he had also led the 1906 visit to Mezőhegyes.)[681] Among the horses bought by the Japanese in Hungary were O'Bayan V-6 and O'Bayan V-7, imported by a Japanese stud farm in 1911 and 1913. The memory of these horses is still preserved in Japan today.[682] It is also interesting to note that one of the Hungarian stud farms had a horse named *Tokio* (born in 1892). It is possible that the Japanese purchase of horses in 1889 is connected to the horse's name.[683] Tokio's value is reflected in the 240,000 forints paid by the Hungarian government to its owner in 1895, as the horse was intended for use as a stud.[684]

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[679] Minisztertanácsi Jegyzőkönyvek 1907. 09. 27.; among the honorees are: "Lieutenant Colonel T. Ohashi" and "Government Commissioner T. Hayashi"

[680] Dr. Hecker Walter: *A Bábolnai Arab Ménes*. Magyarországi Arablótenyésztők Egyesület 2014. pp. 223-224.; An article from 1909 mentions the purchase of 21 additional horses in Mezőhegyes, of which 17 were stallions and 4 were mares. Vadász- és Versenylap, 1909.08.04.

[681] 松岡静雄『滞欧日記』東京、1982., pp. 139-140.

[682] http://keiba.four-friends.com/history/JapanHistory/japan_history.htm. (accessed in 2018; dead link by now). The Ōu Stud Farm (奥羽種馬牧場) bought O'Bayan V-6 (オーバーヤン五ノ六) in 1911 and O'Bayan V-7 (オーバーヤン五ノ七) in 1913.

[683] Talpra Magyar (1885) + Tótleány (1883) = Tokio (1892); Tokio + Moneta (1889) = Mokan (1909). Tokio had a spirited temperament, but proved to be an exceptional racehorse. Even at the age of five, he achieved brilliant victories and was one of the finest Hungarian-bred thoroughbreds. His best son, Mokan, became a stud horse at Kisbér. See: Dr. Hecker Walter, Brenyó József, Dr. Pataki Balázs: *A kisbéri ménes története.* Erdélyi Szalon Könyvkiadó, 2020., p. 79.

[684] Pécsi Napló, 1895-10-08. To put it into perspective, Tokio's 1895 purchase price of 240,000 forints corresponds to a modern value of roughly 3–6 billion HUF in 2026 terms. If we interpret the purchase through today's sport horse market, this amount would be equivalent to acquiring approximately 15–60 top-tier modern breeding stallions.

A souvenir made from the hoof of *Mokan*, whose sire was *Tokio* (Magyar Mezőgazdasági Múzeum)

In light of the Monarchy's import statistics, several cargoes of paddy rice arrived annually at the port of Fiume.[685] Zinc (in old Hungarian: 'horgany') was the most important export, but the Monarchy also shipped sugar (for the first time in 1896, with a value of 12,000 forints). Sugar could have been one of the competitive exports for the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, due to the growing Japanese demand on the one hand, and the increase in domestic production on the other.[686] European beet sugar began to appear on the Japanese market around 1892–1893, and from around 1895, it began to surpass Hong Kong machine-refined sugar (香港車糖 Honkon Kuruma-tō), which was one of the earliest Western-style sugars to enter the Japanese market. Various types of beet sugar were imported, including German, Hungarian, and Russian varieties. The Hungarian beet sugar (ハンガリー甜菜糖 Hangarī tensaitō) imported to Japan was mainly of the KR type *(Klein/Kleine Raffinade*, meaning “small refined” – high-quality white sugar crystals) and the RR type (*Refined Raw* or *Regular Refined*, commonly used for standard white sugar). One of the five main importers of Hungarian beet sugar was Suzuki Shōten (鈴木商店).[687] With Hungarian sugar exports being handled by an undercapitalized company and an incompetent network of agents, and with the difficulty of managing the transport of goods

[685] Józsa Sándor: *Kína és az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia*, Bp., 1966., pp. 60-61.
[686] In Japan, the consumption of sugar became widespread at the beginning of the Meiji period. The establishment of Japanese sugar refineries in Taiwan (after the Sino-Japanese war) in the early 1900s had an impact on sugar imports.
[687] https://www.suzukishoten-museum.com/footstep/history/cat5/cat2/post-162.php (accessed: 2025 Apr.); 樋口弘「日本糖業史」1956年 内外經濟社 pp. 491-492.

while German sugar was inexorably advancing, it is no wonder that between 1900 and 1901, Hungarian sugar exports to Japan fell from 31 tonnes to 18 tonnes. In 1899, the Hungarian government provided state aid for sugar exports, according to the minutes of the 37th meeting of the Council of Ministers on 31 October 1899. The text summarizes a request made by the National Association of Hungarian Sugar Manufacturers to the Minister of Commerce. They sought reimbursement for the Suez Canal dues for a special shipping service, planned for October, to transport sugar stocks to India and Japan. This request was motivated by favorable market conditions in these countries and the risk that failure to meet demand would lead to losing business to competitors. The Minister, in agreement with the Minister for Finance, deemed it necessary to support the service and agreed to reimburse the canal dues based on the space occupied by the sugar loaded in Fiume. In the export of sugar to Japan, the Hatvan Sugar Factory (*Hatvani Cukorgyár*), founded in 1889, was one of the most successful. A contemporary document reveals that there was a monthly shipment of sugar from Fiume to Yokohama, and contemporary opinions stated that "*the Hatvan factory's trademark (anchor in H)*" was "*one of the most famous everywhere*".[688] According to a brief news item from 1899, a contemporary report from Yokohama indicated that white sugar consumption in Japan was on the rise, largely supplied by refined granulated sugar imported from Germany. As German sugar was considered expensive in Japan, this created an opportunity to increase Hungarian sugar exports to the country. The news item also notes that an association of Hungarian and Austrian sugar manufacturers established an agency in Yokohama in 1899, although no further information about this initiative has been found.[689] Over time, however, after the introduction of the Japanese sugar tax in 1901, Hungary's income from this source diminished.

Small export items from the Monarchy to Japan in the early 1880s included spirits; from 1885, wool, woollen cloth, and glassware; in 1887, tartaric acid, vermouth, and jewellery; and in 1889, potash, gloves, wine, lamps, furniture, and soap.[690] For a long time, paper was among the top five exports. Japanese statistics show that, until 1885-86, Noshi silk and silk waste topped the list of articles shipped to the Monarchy. Later, silk remained the main item, but the smaller items of Japanese exports from 1886 included, in addition to silk, rice, leather, various bronze and porcelain articles, and other handicrafts; green tea in

[688] ifj. Reiszig Ede, Haraszthy Lajos: *Hatvan*. In: Borovszky Samu: *Magyarország vármegyéi és városai*, 1910.
[689] Pesti Napló, 1899.11.25.
[690]『大日本外国貿易年表』1990.

1888; fans and awabi shells in 1889; and household articles in 1890. An interesting insight into the use of imported Japanese *raw materials* was provided by a Hungarian report from 1896. One of the beneficiaries and users of copper imported from Japan was the Herzeg brothers' copperware factory and foundry in Pécs. Its main products included copper and bronze fittings for railway carriages, copper ornaments for horse tack, and wine and beer taps. The factory sourced its raw materials directly from England and Japan.[691]

The table below provides an insight into Japan's foreign trade with the Monarchy at that time. Using Japanese statistics,[692] the table below shows the volume of imports and exports over 5-year intervals, as well as the top 5 import and export items between 1882 and 1913. Using Austro-Hungarian data, the Trade and Industry Department of the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture and Trade also compiled an account of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's trade with Japan, which is summarized in another table.[693]

[691] Várady Ferencz (szerk.): *Baranya multja és jelenje 1.* Pécs, 1896.
[692]『大日本外国貿易年表』1990.; Meiji 15., 20., 25., 30., 35., 40., 45., Taisho 2.
[693]『1911年に於ける日墺匈貿易の概況』農商務省商工局、商務彙纂第二十一号、大正2年十月

Year	Japan's export/import value to the Monarchy (Yen)	Share of the Monarchy in Japan's total exports and imports, in percent	Top five exports and imports
Meiji 15. 1882.	Ex.: 121 049	Ex.: 0.32%	1: noshi silk; 2: silk waste; 3: lacquered goods; 4: paper; 5: other miscellaneous articles
	Im.: 5 571	Im.: 0.019%	1: beer; 2: dyeing materials; 3: furs, furskins; 4: other products; 5: other dyes, dyestuffs
Meiji 20. 1887.	Ex.: 288 735	Ex.: 0.55%	1.: noshi silk; 2.: silk waste; 3.: rice; 4.: cocoon silk; 5.: porcelain, clay pots
	Im.: 27 074	Im.: 0.06%	1: other products; 2: paper; 3: tartaric acid; 4: printing paper; 5: beer
Meiji 25. 1892.	Ex.: 341 932	Ex.: 0.37%	1: noshi silk; 2: silk waste; 3: lacquerware; 4: other articles; 5: porcelain, earthenware
	Im.: 10 265	Im.: 0.014%	1: other articles; 2: satin, silk and cotton, mixed; 3: lamps, lamp parts; 4: steel; 5: toilet soap
Meiji 30. 1897.	Ex.: 258 371	Ex.: 0.15%	1: noshi silk; 2: silk waste; 3: rice; 4: copper; 5: fish oil
	Im.: 85 943	Im.: 0.039%	1: printing paper; 2: other paper; 3: other articles; 4: glassware; 5: glass beads
Meiji 35. 1902.	Ex.: 1 143 309	Ex.: 0.44%	1: brown rice; 2: refined copper; 3: silk waste; 4: vegetable wax; 5: noshi silk
	Im.: 2 376 655	Im.: 0.87%	1: sugar, refined, B; 2: imitation Japanese paper; 3: printing paper; 4: cigarette paper; 5: shawl
Meiji 40. 1907.	Ex.: 1 148 716	Ex.: 0.26%	1.: red copper castings; 2.: silk waste; 3.: noshi silk waste; 4.: fish oil, whale oil; 5.: straw spool
	Im.: 2 551 852	Im.: 0.51%	1: imitation Japanese paper; 2: sugar, Dutch 20 grade or better; 3: malt; 4: printing paper; 5: cigarette paper
Meiji 45. Taisho 1. 1912.	Ex.: 1 322 254	Ex.: 0.25%	1.: red copper castings; 2.: silk waste; 3.: vegetable wax; 4.: postal parcel; 5.: other
	Im.: 3 240 674	Im.: 0.52%	1.: worsted yarn; 2.: imitation Japanese paper and tissue paper; 3.: malt; 4.: iron, iron bars, miscellaneous; 5.: lamps
Taisho 2. 1913.	Ex.: 937 537	Ex.: 0.14%	1: red copper castings; 2: silk waste; 3: other ores and other metals; 4: other silk waste; 5: rapeseed oil
	Im.: 3 890 017	Im.: 0.53%	1: worsted yarn; 2: iron, iron bars, miscellaneous; 3: malt; 4: imitation Japanese paper and tissue paper; 5: iron

Year	Value of exports/imports between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Japan (krone)	Japan's share of total exports/imports from the Monarchy, in %
Meiji 11. 1878.	Ex.: 48 306	Ex.: 0.003%
	Im.: 51 904	Im.: 0.003%
Meiji 21. 1888.	Ex.: 122 027	Ex.: 0.008%
	Im.: 727 403	Im.: 0.06%
Meiji 31. 1898.	Ex.: 1 452 889	Ex.: 0.08%
	Im.: 859 523	Im.: 0.05%
Meiji 41. 1908.	Ex.: 5 045 066	Ex.: 0.22%
	Im.: 2 766 128	Im.: 0.11%
Meiji 44. 1911.	Ex.: 5 206 000	Ex.: 0.21%
	Im.: 6 184 000	Im.: 0.19%

In addition to the above, we find some statistics provided by the Hungarian Parliament regarding the 1907–1910 period on the export-import volume between the Kingdom of Hungary and Japan.[694] (The main imported goods during these years were copper, rice, fish and seal blubber, silk and silk goods, wood and bone products, and clay and porcelain goods. The main export items during these years were malt, breeding horses, paper, electric light bulbs, bone glue, fine soap, and torpedoes.)

Year	**Imports from Japan (Krones)**	**Exports to Japan (Krones)**
1907	919000	389000
1908	521000	569000
1909	858000	388000
1910	1805000	434000
1911	1410000	805000

Provided that the statistics are correct (one known issue with them is that they omit certain Hungarian trade volumes that are registered under another country's trade statistics with Japan), one can observe how minimal foreign trade was between the two countries or empires. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1890s, the Dual Monarchy was performing relatively well in foreign trade, managing to turn a deficit into a surplus, with Japan

[694] Főrendiházi Irományok 1913. 600. sz., p. 424.; Közgazdasági értesítő 1913. 8. évf. 2. Kötet., p. 108.

importing increasingly more from the Monarchy. This is well illustrated by a contemporary figure from the *Budapesti Hírlap*: in 1899, goods worth 3,472,730 krones were exported to Japan, primarily sugar and torpedoes. (Based on some data, Hungarian exports to Japan peaked in 1900. In that year, the total export value was approximately 10 million krones, of which 80% was sugar.)[695] Exports of sugar to Asia declined steadily in the early 1900s, although in 1902-3 about 40% of domestic sugar still found an export market in South and Southeast Asia via Trieste.[696]

It is known that Japan sourced part of its torpedo supply from the Monarchy's torpedo factory in Fiume.[697] In the minutes of the 19th meeting of the Council of Ministers on May 4, 1898, a report from the Governor of Fiume stated that large quantities of torpedoes were already prepared for Chile, Argentina, and Japan. The Russian attaché in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy also noted the torpedo purchases in 1904, when Japan placed additional orders.[698] Recognizing the potential of this market, the Monarchy's ambassadors became increasingly active in promoting advanced port technologies and various military developments,[699] including torpedoes, to Japan. Shizuo Matsuoka, the military attaché of the Japanese embassy in Vienna, also mentioned the torpedoes at Fiume in his diary. His entries include several visits that confirm Japan's continued interest in torpedoes as late as 1910. One entry notes, "*The port of Rijeka is four hours from Trieste, and here is the world-famous torpedo factory from which our country buys torpedoes in large quantities every year*".[700] The torpedo was manufactured at the *Whitehead and Co. Torpedo and Engine Factory (Whitehead és Társa Torpedó- és Gépgyár)*, which was established in 1872 following the purchase of the plant and equipment of the bankrupt Fiume-based company *Stabilimento Tecnico Fiumano*. The factory was acquired by the British engineer Robert Whitehead and his business partner,

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[695] Kiss Sándor: *Magyarok, akik szerették Japánt. Első rész* (kézirat), Budapest, Magyar-Japán Gazdasági Klub, 2013., p. 83.

[696] Borbély Ákos – Monory Zénó – Tömördi Máté: *Volt egyszer egy cukoripar – A cukorgyártás két évszázada Magyarországon,* Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 2013. pp. 214-216.

[697] Józsa Sándor: *Kína és az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia*, Bp., 1966., p. 66.; The Fiume torpedo was invented by Hungarian frigate captain János Luppis. In 1857, he developed his first experimental torpedo but lacked the necessary workshop and sponsorship to advance the project. In 1867, he partnered with Robert Whitehead, the technical director of the Stabilimento Technico Fiumana factory, to further develop and manufacture the invention. The torpedo was first demonstrated in 1866, and the new weapon was named "torpedo" after the marble stingray (Torpedo marmorata). Luppis was awarded the Order of the Iron Crown for his innovation. Following Luppis' death in 1875, Robert Whitehead continued to refine the torpedo, achieving significant international success with its design and development.

[698] Evgeny Sergeev: *Russian Military Intelligence in the War with Japan, 1904-05 – Secret operations on land and at sea*. London, Routledge, 2007., p. 75.

[699] 島田昌幸『オーストリア=ハンガリー外交における日本の位置付け―ボスニア併合危機期を中心に(1908-1909)』In: 法学政治学論究, 第62号, 2004.9., p. 208.

[700]松岡静雄『滞欧日記』東京、1982., p. 120.; Meiji 43. (1910) April 13 (translated by the author). The diary also mentions a visit on 13 October 1910, during which a Japanese lieutenant toured the factory.

György Hoyos, a Hungarian count and landowner. By 1906, half of the factory was owned by British companies, while the other half remained in the hands of the Whitehead family. Available data indicates that the first Japanese order was placed in 1895, followed by additional orders annually from 1898 to 1901 and from 1908 to 1913. Among the customers of the torpedo factory in Fiume, France was the most important partner between 1882 and 1913 (30,898,000 Krones), followed by Italy (16,806,000 Krones) and Japan (9,684,000 Krones). Britain (7,749,000 Krones) and Germany (3,886,000 Krones) spent relatively less on torpedoes from Fiume, as both countries held manufacturing licenses and operated their own torpedo factories.[701] In January 1904, a British journalist for The Times visited the torpedo factory in Fiume, where he spoke with the manager, Robert Whitehead, whom he described as "*someone who, for quiet determination and efficiency, might have been the hero of a Jules Verne story.*" Whitehead offered an interesting insight into the Russo-Japanese war from his perspective:

> "*I know nothing about the Japs on land, but on sea they will win. They were here, buying torpedoes. They looked into every corner of the works, understood how delicate a machine a torpedo is, and then ordered 1400 at £400 apiece. Before they took delivery they sent here the smallest officer in their navy, a little chap not more than four feet high and so thin that he could crawl into the compressed air chamber of every torpedo to see whether the engine was working well. The Russians also sent a number of naval officers. They inspected the factory superficially, and ordered twelve torpedoes which, they said, would serve as models. The rest would be made in Russia. Now, it has taken me years to get together and train 900 first-class Croat workmen to the point of skill that is needed to make a torpedo. The war will be over long before the Russians can make one torpedo that will work. They are sure to be beaten on sea. And there is another reason. As you know, there are torpedo tubes under water and torpedo tubes on deck. It is much more dangerous to launch a torpedo from a deck tube under enemy fire than to launch it under water, but it is also much more effective because the aim is better. The Japs ordered deck tubes wherever possible. The Russians preferred submerged tubes. When you are at war, it is better to think more of killing the other fellow than of not getting killed yourself.*"[702]

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[701] Pelles Márton: *Az innovatív haditechnikára alapozott meggazdagodás és politikai befolyásszerzés – Robert Whitehead szerepe a fiumei torpedógyártás világsikerében (1823–1923)*. In: Korall, 21. évf. 81. sz. / 2020. pp. 83-84.; 90.; 93.

[702] Henry Wickham Steed: *Through Thirty Years 1892-1922 – A Personal Narrative.* Vol. 1. 1924, Doubleday, Page &

There were other commercial achievements, as well as trials and ideas that materialized to varying degrees. A few examples of these are worth examining. One Hungarian factory successfully conducted business with Japanese industrial buyers: the predecessor of Tungsram, the *Electric Incandescent Lamp Factory Inc. (Villanyos Izzólámpagyár Rt.)*. In 1891, the company exported two-thirds of its carbon filament incandescent bulbs to Japan and Russia. The factory underwent several transformations, changing its name in 1906 to the *United Filament Lamp and Electricity Co. (Egyesült Izzólámpa és Villamossági Zrt.)*. A strong international presence was crucial for the company, as domestic demand was not growing as rapidly as production capacity.[703] By the early 1910s, the company had established a presence in Japan, with commercial export offices in Yokohama and Kobe from 1905.[704] (There are indications that *Ganz* also attempted to survey the East Asian markets well before any contracts were finalized.[705] In 1904–1905, they sent mechanics to Japan on study trips, so it cannot be ruled out that Ganz also had plans to establish a branch there.)

Japanese trademark document of the *United Incandescent Lamps and Electrical Company Limited*, early 1910s

Co. New York. p. 213.

[703] As of 1911, only 300 localities in Hungary had electric lighting. In.: *A Tungsram Rt. története 1896-1996*. Aschner Lipót Alapítvány, 2004. pp. 12-22.

[704] ユーナイテッド インカンデッセントランプス エンド エレットリカル カムパニー リミテッド (United Incandescent Lamps and Electrical Company Limited), the name of the lamp in Japanese: 白熱電氣燈； *A Tungsram Rt. története 1896-1996*. Aschner Lipót Alapítvány, 2004., p. 22.

[705] Magyar Gépipar, 1905-12-25 / 24-25. szám; Magyar Nemzet, 1904-03-01 / 52. szám; Among the mechanics, Géza Szuk and several other unidentified Ganz employees can be mentioned.

Regarding Hungarian wine exports, the following information was published in a Hungarian wine journal. In 1900, it was reported that Hungarian wine exports to Japan were primarily shipped from the Austrian port of Trieste rather than the Hungarian port of Fiume, and that further development of exports was considered desirable. Drawing from the statistics from the same year, "*the last three Lloyd steamers*" exported 1,569 barrels or crates of wine from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to East Asia, with the majority (1,284) destined for Japan. A portion of the shipment – though the exact amount is unknown – was Hungarian bottled wine.[706] In 1904, the same trade journal reported that a Hungarian merchant, Győző Komor, who lived in Yokohama, gave a lecture at the library of the Budapest Trade Museum. In his talk, he emphasized that the Japanese public and merchants were largely unfamiliar with Hungary and its products, as Hungarian goods typically reached Japanese consumers through intermediary merchants. Komor noted that he had only heard of one Hungarian product in Japan – Tokaji wine – which was not necessarily recognized as Hungarian by the local population. He expressed hope that Hungarian wine exports would increase and that Japanese consumers would become more familiar with Hungarian products.[707] In a 1908 article, the journal referenced a Hungarian statistic, the 1907 report of the Austro-Hungarian Consulate General on wine trade with Japan: while in 1906 the Dual Monarchy exported just 86 yen worth of wine to Japan, this figure rose to 18,558 yen in 1907. The report noted that the wines were probably Hungarian, although the Consulate General's statement was not explicit on this point.[708] Whether the famous Tokaji wine was regarded as Hungarian in Japan is illustrated by a Japanese story from 1908. The story concerns General Kuwashi Okazawa (岡沢精), Emperor Meiji's Chief Military Aide-de-Camp and one of the emperor's closest confidants. On November 21, 1908, Okazawa suffered an accident and underwent two operations, but his condition continued to deteriorate because of complications. By December 12, he was on his deathbed. Emperor Meiji, who was deeply attached to him, ordered that all restrictions previously imposed on him be lifted. At Okazawa's own request, General Maresuke Nogi brought him a bottle of *Hungarian Tokaji Aszú* wine that had been kept beside his own bed. Nogi opened the bottle, and the two men shared Okazawa's final sip of the Tokaji together. He died later that same day.[709]

[706] Borászati Lapok 32. Évf. 1900.06.03. 23. Sz. p. 501.
[707] Borászati Lapok 36. Évf. 1904.11.27. 48. Sz. p. 926.
[708] Borászati Lapok 40. Évf. 1908.11.29. 48. Sz. p. 737.
[709] 岡沢 祐吉: 明治天皇の初代侍従武官長: 事君十余年、脛骨為に曲がる. Kadokawa, 1999

Very rare Japanese map of Austro-Hungarian Empire from "New World Atlas", 1904 (袖珍世界新地圖 明治 37, private collection)

According to a trade journal, Hungarian soaps were already in demand in Japan by 1903, owing to the high quality of Hungarian scented soap production. In January 1904, a shipment worth more than 15,000 krones from one of the Hungarian soap factories was on its way to Japan. A 1905 report notes that the *Klein and Son soap factory (Klein és fia Szappangyár)* had been exporting Hungarian scented soap to Japan for years. An interesting legal dispute is also linked to this factory, which arose when a counterfeit version of its soap appeared in Japan, produced by *R. Assister & Cie*. Its packaging closely imitated the original, and the firm in Japan even registered Archduke Joseph's trademark, and used it on its own products. As a result, the Klein soap factory found itself facing trademark infringement issues.[710] Austro-Hungarian diplomats were reportedly aware of the

[710] At the time, Japanese trademark law followed a "first-to-file" principle, meaning that whoever registered a mark first in Japan could legally own it. If R. Assister & Cie. registered Archduke Joseph's name or portrait before the Hungarian company, they would have been recognized as the rightful owners, and the original Klein soap could have been treated as infringing. Although Japan joined the Paris Convention in 1899, trademark protection remained inconsistent and often problematic around 1905. Archduke Joseph of the Habsburg Palatinate branch was widely known, and his name was associated with quality.

complaint, but it remains unclear how the matter was ultimately resolved, and no further details are known.[711] Statistics from later years show that toilet soap exports were thriving in 1907–1908, with values of 117,230 and 125,650 krones respectively, but declined to 49,250 and 28,760 krones in 1909 and 1910.[712]

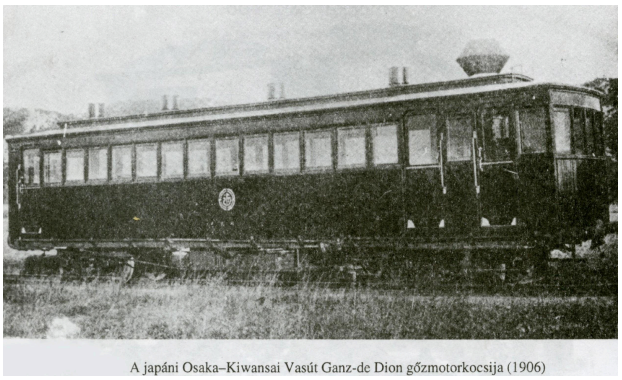
In 1905, the *Arad Carriage Works (Aradi Vagon Gyár)* – located in what is now Romania – participated in a bid for a substantial state contract: the factory was expecting a large order from the Japanese government, as Japan had requested a proposal from the factory's management for the manufacture and delivery of three hundred railroad cars, which were expected to be put into service in Manchuria. At the time of the report, it had not yet been decided whether the Arad wagon factory would receive the order; however, the factory's management had already sent the proposal, design, and budget to Japan. Whether this contract was awarded to the Arad factory is not known.[713]

In 1907, Japan imported two steam motor coaches of its own design from the renowned Budapest manufacturer Ganz. These were put into service by the Hakata-wan and Kokutetsu Kansai Railway Companies (the Kokutetsu Kansai Railway Company used the steam motor coaches on the line between Minatomachi and Kashiwara). Later, the Osaka Ironworks[714] acquired the rights to produce steam motor coaches locally. As a result, they only purchased steam engines and gearboxes from Ganz, which were then fitted to Japanese-made steam railcars. Ganz supplied Japan with a total of seven 50-horsepower steam generator sets equipped with the Ganz-de Dion Bouton system, through a company called E. H. Hunter. These units were installed in motor coaches built in Osaka in 1906 with a track gauge of 1067 mm.[715] By 1909, several Japanese railway companies, including the Kin'etsu and Kanan Railway Companies, operated steam motor coaches powered by Ganz engines.[716] As for the background of these sales, it is important to note that locomotive manufacturing – a rapidly evolving and sophisticated field in Japan – transitioned quickly from near-total reliance on standard locomotive imports from the West (1870s: mainly British; 1890s: U.S. and German) to complete self-sufficiency. By 1913, the demand for new generations of standard locomotives – those used on Japan's main narrow-gauge lines – was met entirely by domestic producers. In contrast, the import

[711] Vegyi Ipar, 1903.12.25., 1904.01.25., 1905.06.25.
[712] Országgyűlési Főrendiházi Irományok, 1910. 600. sz., p. 424.
[713] Magyar Ipar, 1905-02-19
[714] later: 日立造船桜島工場
[715] Villányi György: *Gőzmotorkocsik és kismozdonyok*, MÁV Rt, Budapest, 1996.
[716] 青木栄一『交通・運輸技術の自立ー1910～1921（明治43～大正10）』In: 交通・運輸の発達と技術革新:歴史的考察, 1986年, 国際連合大学, 第4章

of light-railway engines, used on the country's smaller-gauge local light railways, followed a different trajectory. The explosive growth of Japan's light railway network began in the 1910s, and imports from the West continued until 1928.[717]

The Ganz steam motor coach used by the Kin'ecu Railway Company



The Ganz-de Dion steam engine coach of the Kansai Railway (1906)

According to a 1908 newspaper article, the town of Losonc (now: Lučenec, Slovakia) was home to two enamelware factories, one of which shipped carloads of enamelware as far as Bombay, China, and Japan.[718]

There are indications that Japanese interest extended to pistols designed and manufactured in Hungary. Secondary sources mention a 1908 visit by a Japanese trade delegation to the prominent Budapest-based firearms manufacturer, the *Arms and Machine Factory (Fegyver- és Gépgyár Rt.)*.[719] The company was internationally recognized for the

[717] Steven J. Ericson: *Importing Locomotives in Meiji Japan: International Business and Technology Transfer in the Railroad Industry*. In: Osiris 13 (1998). pp. 129–133.
[718] Városok Lapja, 1908.11.15.; Losonc (Lučenec) and its surrounding area, including Fülek, were important centers of enamelware production in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Factories such as Sternlicht S. & Co. and Rakottyay produced common household items like pots, trays, butter dishes, and teapots, often marked with a distinctive rooster symbol. These enamel products were widely used and represented an important branch of Hungarian industry at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.
[719] *Magyar Tudós Tárlat* – A Magyar Mezőgazdasági Múzeum és Könyvtár kiadványa. Budapest, 2018. p. 27.

innovative Frommer pistols, invented by the Hungarian mechanical engineer and inventor Rudolf Frommer. The specifics of the delegation's visit, including whether any purchases were made, remain unknown.

Around 1908, the Hungarian tobacco industry cultivated close ties with the Japanese market and developed three tobacco products tailored to Japanese consumer preferences. According to the Hungarian envoy in Japan, a "*recent shipment of 100 million cigarettes sold out quickly*", leading to expectations that annual exports could increase to 400–500 million units.[720]

Even some unusual products were sent to Japan to test whether they could be shipped successfully. To assess the shelf life and transportability of milk and cream products, as well as their resistance to tropical climates, Hungary sent samples to Zanzibar, Japan, and Mexico in 1904. Some samples were opened on site, while others were returned to be tested by the sender. The results were entirely satisfactory in every case, showing that the goods could withstand hot climates without spoiling, even when crossing the equator.[721]

Ideas for various product exports came from different sources. In the summer of 1909, Budapest hosted the 14th International Medical Congress, where the Japanese bacteriologist Shibasaburō Kitasato (北里柴三郎) was present. The conference featured Transylvanian mineral waters presented by the *Hungarian Mineral Water Distribution and Export Company (Magyar Ásványvíz Forgalmi és Kiviteli Rt.)*. World-renowned physicians reportedly could not stop praising the excellence of the mineral waters from Borhegy (?), Borszék (now: Borsec in Romania), Előpatak (now: Vâlcele in Romania), and Sztojka (now: Stoiceni, Romania). Kitasato is said to have regarded the alkaline, salty mineral water from Sztojka as possessing particularly exceptional healing properties, and he reportedly promised to help facilitate its regular export to Japan.[722] Nevertheless, it remains unclear what ultimately became of this idea.

A particularly interesting small-scale business relationship was formed when Prince Fushiminomiya visited Budapest in 1910 and traveled in automobiles supplied by the *Magyar Benz Automobilgyár (Hungarian Benz Automobile Factory)*. During his visit, the Hungarian Royal Ministry of Defense presented domestically produced military passenger and cargo vehicles from the same company to the prince. Impressed, the prince placed an

[720] Az Ujság, 1908-05-17.
[721] Vegyi Ipar, 1905.02.10.
[722] Szatmármegyei Közlöny, 1909.09.19.

order through the Japanese consulate for one 60-horsepower and one 80-horsepower automobile from the Hungarian Benz Factory, according to a newspaper article.[723]

Some business ventures were not realistic at all. For instance, in 1912, growing imports of inexpensive Japanese oak into Europe prompted Hungarian timber firms to explore opportunities in Japan. A consortium comprising *Szentlőrinci Parkettgyár Rt., (Szentlőrinc Parquet Factory Ltd.)*, Aladár Laendler, and the Neuschlosz company dispatched an expert to investigate the feasibility of establishing steam-powered sawmills and acquiring forest concessions in Japan.[724]

To put the Hungarian trade results into perspective, we can examine the dynamic development of Japan's foreign trade during this period by referring to the 1910 booklet on Japan's economy titled '*Japán Közgazdasága'* by Ödön Palotay Várpalotai, Honorary Consul of Japan in Budapest, which draws upon Japanese sources:

> "*In 1867, Japan joined the ranks of modern states, and its foreign trade was still quite insignificant. Only a few British and American ships carried Japan's trade with the West. The first significant increase came in 1874, with exports totaling 19 million yen and imports reaching 23 million yen. From 1874 to 1883, the increase in trade was very slow; during these ten years, the average foreign trade included 27 million yen worth of exports and 29 million yen of imports. Between 1884 and 1893, the turnover almost doubled compared to the previous decade, with exports totaling 62.5 million yen and imports 57 million yen. From 1894 onwards, development proceeded at a rapid pace. By 1904, exports and imports exceeded 300 million yen, and since then, until 1907, imports had risen to 494 million yen and exports to 432 million yen. In 1908, there was a decline of about 120 million yen, but this was only a temporary consequence of depressed economic conditions. Preliminary figures for 1909 show that Japan's external balance of trade improved significantly compared to 1908, as exports rose from 378 million yen to 412 million yen, while imports fell from 436 million yen to 393 million yen. As a result, the previous year's trade deficit of 59 million yen turned into a surplus of about 19 million yen in 1909.*"[725]

The tables below provide a detailed snapshot on Japan's exports to and imports from various countries in 1907.

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[723] Budapesti Hírlap, 1910-04-10

[724] Pesti Napló, 1912-12-17.

[725] Várpalotai Palotay Ödön: *Japán közgazdasága.* Budapesti Japán Császári Konzulátus, Budapest, 1910., pp. 51-52. (1 yen=2.51 krone); Translated by the Author

	Yokohama	Kobe	Osaka	Nagasaki	Hakodate	Other Ports	Total
ASIA	Yen	Yen	Yen	Yen	Yen	Yen	Yen
China	7,675,250	28,721,924	28,095,449	1,640,692	1,117,095	18,368,823	**85,619,233**
Kwantung Province	2,706,100	1,443,423	9,630,557	444,595	1,601	6,174,407	**20,400,683**
Korea	1,819,986	1,077,966	19,673,962	390,084	283	9,830,195	**32,792,476**
Hong Kong	2,312,317	14,757,764	565,163	1,287,302	1,268	5,460,948	**24,384,762**
British India	6,051,147	6,049,106	585,014	11,379	-	391,443	**13,088,089**
British states settlement	1,159,695	2,305,907	130,210	31,941	-	2,139,810	**5,767,563**
Dutch India	489,233	1,226,224	115,187	374	-	430,294	**2,261,312**
French Indo-China	80,396	93,802	37,362	6,880	-	31,674	**250,114**
Asiatic Russia	84,528	225,434	616,526	411,806	315,039	3,414,390	**5,067,723**
Philippine Islands	449,794	1,177,307	13,667	107,196	-	47,762	**1,795,726**
Siam	197,837	107,995	5,930	1,095	-	25,533	**338,390**
TOTAL	**23,026,283**	**57,186,852**	**59,469,027**	**4,333,344**	**1,435,286**	**46,315,279**	**191,766,071**
EUROPE							
Great Britain	13,061,444	8,542,837	254,920	58,907	43,291	481,906	**22,443,305**
France	38,859,368	3,672,279	501	507	-	-	**42,532,655**
Germany	4,312,605	6,839,166	58,174	15,472	-	85,202	**11,255,619**
Belgium	828,821	933,386	4,530	122,627	49,713	115,320	**2,054,397**
Italy	12,308,147	1,453,076	-	9,512	-	-	**13,770,735**
Switzerland	59,402	4,823	-	-	-	-	**64,225**
Austria-Hungary	441,444	676,648	-	5,124	-	25,500	**1,148,716**
Holland	92,139	172,626	-	2,040	-	-	**266,805**
Sweden	5,264	2,273	-	12	-	-	**7,549**
Norway	1,715	1,688	-	811	-	-	**4,214**
Russia	360,892	45,254	714	34,700	-	-	**441,560**
Spain	101,693	99,160	-	-	-	-	**200,853**
Denmark	35,481	62,091	-	244	-	-	**97,816**
Turkey	49,498	21,065	-	35	-	-	**70,598**
Portugal	514	7,508	-	-	-	-	**8,022**
TOTAL	**70,518,427**	**22,533,880**	**313,839**	**249,991**	**93,004**	**657,928**	**94,367,069**

AMERICA							
United States	105,480,972	20,740,583	197,719	34,224	479,145	4,168,372	**131,101,015**
British America	1,909,737	1,489,137	-	82,058	26,120	406,605	**3,863,657**
Mexico	93,503	8,658	-	107	23,854	715,177	**841,299**
Peru	27,664	45,486	-	-	-	14,700	**87,850**
Chile	101,763	9,766	-	-	-	18,600	**130,129**
TOTAL	**107,613,639**	**22,293,630**	**197,719**	**66,389**	**529,119**	**5,323,454**	**136,023,950**
ALL OTHER							
Australia	2,441,805	1,833,295	54,818	3,848	126,549	333,588	**4,793,903**
Hawaii	909,855	2,465,578	2,184	1,314	84,946	4,800	**3,468,677**
Egypt	221,459	164,813	-	28	-	-	**386,300**
TOTAL	**3,573,119**	**4,463,686**	**57,002**	**5,190**	**211,495**	**338,388**	**8,648,880**
Other countries	1,157,066	190,217	-	30	-	259,590	**1,606,903**
GRAND TOTAL	**205,888,534**	**106,668,265**	**60,037,587**	**4,654,944**	**2,268,904**	**52,894,639**	**432,412,873**

Table of the total value of commodities exported to various foreign countries from each port (1907)[726]

	Yokohama	**Kobe**	**Osaka**	**Nagasaki**	**Hakodate**	**Other Ports**	**Total**
ASIA	Yen	Yen	Yen	Yen	Yen	Yen	Yen
China	12,742,645	23,965,070	9,604,602	3,006,878	5,192	9,858,162	**59,182,369**
Kwantung Province	1,190,924	2,629,800	479,314	272,552	-	4,327,085	**8,809,675**
Korea	620,146	3,194,586	8,487,895	474,938	1,289	3,592,658	**16,371,512**
Hong Kong	271,881	166,074	116,767	13,233	21	252,634	**820,610**
British India	11,884,035	48,956,281	4,764,736	174,029	-	8,814,203	**74,593,284**
British states settlement	691,594	2,318,446	19,819	21,635	-	10,764	**3,062,258**
Dutch India	7,412,158	2,558,025	3,571,465	376,467	1,022	8,120,333	**22,039,470**
French Indo-China	3,499,084	4,066,099	-	477,470	-	620,259	**8,662,919**
Asiatic Russia	537,968	911,040	4,939	67,305	13,865	120,532	**1,655,649**
Philippine Islands	1,026,688	293,555	227,147	10,541	-	601,247	**2,159,178**

[726] 大日本外国貿易年表 1907. p. 218.

Siam	158,683	2,025,045	23,904	411,368	-	119,265	**2,738,695**
TOTAL	**40,035,626**	**91,084,451**	**27,300,588**	**5,306,416**	**21,389**	**36,347,142**	**200,095,612**
EUROPE							
Great Britain	52,867,666	51,128,007	2,929,533	7,188,275	41,225	2,090,364	**116,245,070**
France	2,816,963	2,491,103	1,626,732	67,162	20	22,977	**7,024,957**
Germany	22,622,500	22,423,432	857,276	464,456	80	1,299,998	**47,667,742**
Belgium	6,224,386	6,036,963	383,270	613,902	-	139,778	**13,398,299**
Italy	486,084	436,733	19,453	604	-	-	**942,874**
Switzerland	1,584,777	1,431,740	100,110	228	-	11	**3,116,866**
Austria-Hungary	1,486,205	962,561	102,258	708	-	120	**2,551,852**
Holland	405,586	683,390	112,918	2,472	-	30	**1,204,396**
Sweden	308,432	954,140	48,880	12,001	-	-	**1,323,453**
Norway	238,519	352,066	114,000	112,358	-	30,847	**847,790**
Russia	122,120	10,406	7,531	15,113	335	19,382	**174,887**
Spain	221,156	88,377	3,946	711	-	-	**314,190**
Denmark	120,520	109,394	2,237	2,813	-	-	**234,964**
Turkey	136,578	1,539	-	36	-	121	**138,274**
Portugal	8,227	16,344	1,626	1,433	-	-	**27,630**
TOTAL	**89,649,719**	**87,126,195**	**6,309,770**	**8,482,272**	**41,660**	**3,603,628**	**195,213,244**
AMERICA							
United States	31,743,969	38,570,738	439,627	2,391,767	608,829	6,942,432	**80,697,362**
British America	874,352	254,009	80,368	8,411	-	-	**1,217,140**
Mexico	8	942	-	-	-	10	**960**
Peru	172,819	310,706	-	-	-	-	**483,525**
Chile	17,781	340,836	-	-	-	-	**358,617**
TOTAL	**32,808,929**	**39,477,231**	**519,995**	**2,400,178**	**608,829**	**6,942,442**	**82,757,604**
ALL OTHER							
Australia	6,381,412	1,407,458	1,347	26,614	-	1,922	**7,818,753**
Hawaii	13,246	4,762	1,301	11	-	-	**19,320**
Egypt	1,552,888	1,888,650	15,557	52	-	57	**3,457,204**
TOTAL	**7,947,546**	**3,300,870**	**18,205**	**26,677**	**-**	**1,979**	**11,295,277**
Other countries, Unknown	2,043,813	2,448,819	283,084	14,958	1,727	313,208	**5,105,609**

GRAND TOTAL	**172,485,633**	**223,437,566**	**34,431,642**	**16,230,501**	**673,605**	**47,208,399**	**494,467,346**

Table of the total value of commodities imported from various foreign countries into each port (1907)[727]

An early item that attracted Hungarian interest (as early as 1868) was Japanese silkworm eggs. In 1868, Palatine Joseph (*József nádor*) brought a large quantity of original silkworm eggs from Japan and distributed them among producers. (He repeated the same in 1869, 1870, and 1871.)[728] Due to a silkworm disease that had severely reduced domestic silk production in Hungary, the Minister of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce also imported Japanese silkworm eggs to help restore healthy stock. Some of these eggs were then distributed through the Hungarian Minister of Religion and Public Education to agricultural instructors involved in silk production.[729] The other item Hungarians were initially interested in was Japanese paper leather. At a meeting of the handicrafts section of the Hungarian Industrial Association in 1872, a collection of "Japanese paper leather" donated by János Xántus was presented. This material was most probably 金唐革紙 (Kinkarakawashi, "gilt leather paper" or "leather-like paper"), a specially treated Japanese paper that was embossed, coated, lacquered, and often gilded to imitate expensive European gilt leather. The leatherworkers and decorative arts craftsmen who examined it were impressed by its low cost, attractive appearance, and durability. They recommended importing a larger sample shipment from Japan to test its suitability for industrial use, believing that it could serve as an effective substitute for American leather canvas, a coated fabric widely used in bookbinding, upholstery, and decorative work.[730] In 1874, a sample shipment of various Japanese goods arrived from Japan, addressed to the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce in Hungary. It consisted mainly of items considered suitable for import trade in the Dual Monarchy, such as Japanese lacquerware, bronzes, basketry, paper goods, silk dyeing, silk embroidery, and similar products. The minister handed this shipment over to the National Hungarian Industrial Association, which put it on public display – alongside a lecture on the production of lacquerware – and made it available for purchase at cost price.[731]

[727] 大日本外国貿易年表 1907. p. 219.
[728] Félegyházi Hírlap, 1891-08-02.
[729] Néptanítók lapja, 1869-04-01
[730] Budapesti Közlöny, 1872-02-10.
[731] Budapesti Közlöny, 1874-09-22

Collection of Japanese leather wall covering samples, 19th century (Iparművészeti Múzeum)

In 1890, the Austrian consul in Yokohama, Gustav Kreitner, attempted to attract the interest of traders with some market research and various recommendations. Kreitner's speech, translated into Hungarian by Dr. János Jankó, was published in 1890 in *Földrajzi Közlemények*. The text was originally written in German, and the Hungarian version was read aloud at a meeting of the Hungarian Geographical Society (*Földrajzi Társaság*) on 16 May 1890. In his speech, the consul first examined Austrian Lloyd's East Asian services (Lloyd started services to Yokohama in the late 1890s; this text was written before that):

> "*The Austro-Hungarian Lloyd has so far done little to improve our trade relations with Japan. The East Asian route of our principal steamship company extends only as far as Hong Kong, but even this is only a second-rate line, connecting with the Trieste-Bombay line to India, which, as it also touches Bombay, seems to depend to some extent on that route. The transport of goods to and from Japan on the ships of Austro-Hungarian Lloyd is already expensive during the long voyage (even if its rates are the same as those of other companies); but the quality of the goods also suffers because they have to be transshipped in Bombay and Hong Kong. Furthermore, even in the latter port, there is often a wait for a ship – usually arriving and departing at uncertain times – to take the goods on to Japan, and not infrequently, the goods must face an unexpected queue. Moreover, the agents of*

our Lloyd,[732] *compared with those of other companies, have little freedom of action, which the great distance, local experience, and operation require, and which is in the interest of both the shipping company and its customers (...) In the interest of our commercial connections with Japan, I would consider it advantageous for Austro-Hungarian Lloyd to extend its East Asian line as far as Yokohama, but as a separate and independent line, devoted mainly to East Asia. This line, if dependent on Bombay, will be detrimental to trade with East Asia because the journey and the transport of goods will take longer, and the cargo should not suffer from the transshipment necessary due to the connection with India. Even if, under our present conditions, our commercial connections with East Asia make the viability of the line appear unfavourable with regard to exports, we may justly hope that a regular connection will produce some results. And ships returning from Japan and China to Trieste, Fiume, and Venice can always be counted on to have goods to load. If, however, we also consider that by including Shanghai and Yokohama in the shipping routes, we shall come into direct contact with China proper and Japan, and if we remember the experience that where the commercial flag of a nation flies, the commerce of that country flourishes, then we can have no doubt as to the viability of such a line on a national basis.*"[733]

Kreitner mentioned some facts about the insurance companies established in Japan:

"*Among the insurance companies, only in Yokohama, there are 106 represented from all countries. This reminds me that there is much to be done in this area and that companies can do profitable business here (...) Austria-Hungary is represented by two companies, the Assecurazione Generale in Trieste and the Foncière insurance company in Budapest.*"[734]

He provided a detailed description of the quality standards required for the Japanese market, the specific needs of certain trade sectors in Japan, and the challenges faced so far in foreign trade:

"*(...) our share of Japan's international trade is very small, yet I believe we are competitive in the few commodities we introduced into the Japanese market. May I*

[732] The Austrian Lloyd had the following agents in Yokohama: from 1889 to 1893: F. Retz & Co.; from 1894 to 1901: Browne & Co.; and in 1902, Pollak Bros. We have no data on later business collaborations. See: *The Japan Gazette*, 1889–1902.

[733] Gustav Kreitner: *Japán a nemzetközi kereskedelemben*. In: Földrajzi Közlemények, 1890. 18. kötet, pp. 284-285., pp. 288-289. (translated by the author)

[734] Gustav Kreitner: *Japán a nemzetközi kereskedelemben*. In: Földrajzi Közlemények, 1890. 18. kötet, p. 285. (translated by the author)

list a few of these commodities (...) First and foremost, we must mention wool fabrics (...). Printing paper would also find a good place in the Japanese market. During the past year, a few consignments of Austrian printing paper arrived in Yokohama in a very poor state, poorly protected by cumbersome packaging and weak packing slats, which, of course, thoroughly cooled enthusiasm for new orders (...) Every year we supply Japan with an increasing amount of glassware, including pressed glass, lamp glass, mirrors, and even glass beads. Some of these, however, reach Japan via England, and are then entered under the rubrics of English products (...) Black leather imports have also made a comeback in Japan; I have seen 'German' leather produced in Krems near the Danube. Strong goatskin is used for military purposes, and hides (true skin) for cleaning metal objects. Hungarian flour also has prospects in the Japanese market, but only if the trial consignments are entrusted to good hands (...). Hungarian wine comes but little to Japan, and I believe it is because our wine merchants do not wish to send large consignments at their own risk, although this experiment could, in due course, yield very handsome results. But our merchants have little confidence in these distant lands, and so we have little confidence in sending spirits in casks. Other goods recommended for export to Japan are cheap wall clocks (...), fur and woolen hats (...), cheap footwear, woolen and cotton gloves, and oil paints (in white and black iron cans at £28 each for painting houses and boats), wax articles (especially wax candles), (...) toilet soap, perfumery, etc. Finally, our industry could also participate in those large and profitable businesses of Germany which it does with round and wide-headed lath nails. Similarly, (...) the Japanese market also consumes iron, ironware, pots, knives, corkscrews, spoons, blacksmiths' tools, and other handicraft tools."[735]

He concluded by writing:

"*If we wish to develop commercially in East Asia or Japan, the will of our domestic manufacturers and merchants must be rooted in a firm determination to produce and market the goods which these foreign markets prefer. (...) In Japan, as we have said, there are no Austrian or Hungarian firms. In any case, this is an unfortunate omission in our trade relations, because it means that an important factor of strong activity is missing here: the fighter in the ring. (...) If we can find our compatriots among the competitive and vigorous traders in Japan, some of our articles will thus*

[735] Gustav Kreitner: *Japán a nemzetközi kereskedelemben*. In: Földrajzi Közlemények, 1890. 18. kötet, pp. 286-287. (translated by the author)

establish a presence there in the surest way. And we hope that these goods will get there under our flag!"[736]

Apparently, the pep talks and writings were of little help, as evidenced by the traveler János Vadona, who wrote the following in 1893 about the trade between Austria-Hungary and Japan:

"*North American ships bring a lot of flour to Japan, but it is behind ours. I hear that from France, under the name of French wine, comes a Hungarian variety! The reason for this anomalous state of things is found by the related parties in the fact that neither the national wine-cellar association nor any other wholesalers or producers dare to send their goods without receiving money in advance. While the French ships succeed, the Hungarians and Austrians are unable to extend their voyages as far as Yokohama. Is this not a sharp mockery of the shiftlessness of our trade?*"[737]

In the same year, 1893, at least, it looked like something was about to change. A news article revealed that the central office of the company known as the 'Hungarian Exporting Association' managed by the *Hungarian Trading Corporation (Magyar Kereskedelmi Rt.)*, had set as its goal the export of Hungarian goods to India, China, Japan, and the East Indian islands, and that, thanks to assistance provided by the Minister of Commerce, not only state-owned but also private companies could avail themselves of the services of its representatives. As I have not yet found any further information on what happened, if anything, with this association and its possible success in facilitating export activities, it is reasonable to assume that not much changed, and that the association was either dissolved or gradually lost its momentum over time.[738]

There were other attempts to improve Hungary's trade situation: one occurred in 1899. During the Diet that year, Count Apponyi advocated for the development of East Asian trade. In response, the joint foreign minister, Goluchowski, made every effort to ensure that Austrian and Hungarian merchants joined warships bound for East Asia. However, his appeals to ministers and companies went largely unheeded. Instead of focusing on Asia, the Hungarian government had, since the early 1880s, concentrated on expanding trade relations with Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Greece. At this point, it is worth comparing Austro-Hungarian foreign trade results with Japan to those with

[736] Gustav Kreitner: *Japán a nemzetközi kereskedelemben*. In: Földrajzi Közlemények, 1890. 18. kötet, p. 288. (translated by the author)
[737] Vadona János: *Az öt világrészből*. Bp., Hornyánszky, 1893., p. 533. (translated by the author)
[738] Közgazdasági és közigazgatási szemle, 1893., XVII évf. 1. Kötet, p. 642.

China during the same period. In 2008, a research project in Prague successfully explored and analyzed the foreign trade relations between the Monarchy and China, primarily based on Austrian sources and focusing on exports.[739] The findings of the Prague research align closely with the Japanese case discussed earlier, indicating a fundamentally stagnant trade relationship that remained almost negligible in terms of total foreign trade. Between 1899 and 1913, China's share of the Monarchy's total export-import turnover started at approximately 0.3% and showed a slight upward trend, peaking at 0.6% in 1911 before declining to 0.4% in 1913. Similarly, China's share of the Monarchy's total export volume followed a modest increase, rising from around 0.1% in 1902 to approximately 0.4% in 1906. However, it dipped back to 0.1% in 1908–1909 and stabilized at 0.2% during 1910–1912.[740] A valuable explanation for these low trade figures emerges from a survey conducted in Vienna: China was not regarded by the Monarchy as a market of industrial significance or as an attractive destination for any specific product segment.[741] Prague-based researcher Aleš Skřivan Jr. attributes the low volume of foreign trade between China and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to two primary factors. First, the significant geographical distance made trade and investment circles more inclined to focus on closer, more economically attractive regions rather than distant China. Second, there was a lack of commercially appealing goods, products, and services on both the Chinese and Austro-Hungarian sides.[742] Skřivan notes that the distant Monarchy was not perceived as a strong superpower in China and suffered from a poor reputation due to its association with unequal treaties. Austro-Hungarian traders had access to information about the Chinese market through consulate reports made available at the Chambers of Commerce. However, only a small number of ambitious traders made use of this resource.[743] Additionally, trade relations were hindered by issues with Österreichischer Lloyd (known as

[739] *Austro-Hungarian Export to China and its Position Within the Total Export of the Habsburg Monarchy* (FIGA grant, Faculty of Economics and Public Administration, University of Economics, Prague 2008)

[740] The tables are available here: Aleš Skřivan, Jr.: *Austro-Hungarian Export to China*. Praha, Prague Papers on the History of International Relations, 2008., p. 195. The study highlights an intriguing fact: certain trade activities, such as arms sales to China by the Škoda factory in Pilsen in 1899, 1904, 1906, and 1910, were intentionally left unregistered for understandable reasons and cannot be found in contemporary statistics. Analyzing Chinese trade records does not yield better insights, as goods were recorded under the flags of the ships entering the ports, regardless of their actual origin. Consequently, a portion of Austro-Hungarian foreign trade volume is subsumed within German, British, or Russian-related Chinese statistics.

[741] Georg-Ludwig Heise: *Beiträge zu den Wirtschaftsbeziehungen zwischen Österreich-Ungarn und China (1860 – 1914)*, Dissertation, Geisteswissenschaftliche Fakultät der Universität Wien, Wien 1999. p. 380. ; cited by: Aleš Skřivan, Jr.: *Austro-Hungarian Export to China*. Praha, Prague Papers on the History of International Relations, 2008., p. 191.

[742] Aleš Skřivan, Jr.: *Austro-Hungarian Export to China*. Praha, Prague Papers on the History of International Relations, 2008., pp. 193-194.

[743] Aleš Skřivan, Jr.: *Austro-Hungarian Export to China*. Praha, Prague Papers on the History of International Relations, 2008., p. 193.

Österreichisch-Ungarischer Lloyd until 1891). These included uncompetitive pricing for long-haul shipping, delayed departures of vessels, and the slow speed of their ships.[744] Furthermore, Trieste's declining position in the market posed another challenge, as many goods from Eastern Europe were routed to East Asia via Hamburg instead.

Returning to Japan, it is noteworthy that measures to promote foreign trade extended to the field of education. In 1894, the Hungarian government decided to expand the existing course in 'oriental languages' at the *Budapest Academy of Commerce (Budapesti Kereskedelmi Akadémia)* by introducing a specialized course in 'oriental trade'. This initiative aimed to stimulate interest in Eastern trade and foster foreign relations. The expanded curriculum included Romanian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Modern Greek, Turkish, 'Oriental ethnography', history, commercial geography, general foreign trade, customs, and consular and legal studies. Although Japan was not initially part of the curriculum, the program's success led to its elevation to a college-level institution by 1899, becoming the *Oriental Academy of Commerce (Keleti Kereskedelmi Akadémia)*. The new academy subsequently began to focus more attention on East Asia and Japan.[745] Evidence of this is found in the fact that in 1904, one of the students, Adolf Polányi/Pollacsek, had already won an academic scholarship to Japan. Two years later, in 1906, the Hungarian Minister of Commerce sent Gyula Pirnitzer (1876–?) as a specialist correspondent to India, China, and Japan to study commercial conditions in those countries from the perspective of Hungarian exports. In parallel with the reorganization of education in Hungary and the survey of possible commercial conditions favourable to Hungary, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy also sought to boost trade between the two countries through economic measures. This is reflected in the Hungarian Council of Ministers' Protocol of 12–15 December 1900,[746] which addressed the overdraft caused by the increased number of ships traveling to Japan, as noted by the Ministry of Commerce. The Secretary of State for Trade proposed improving traffic connections with East Asia, particularly Japan, by adjusting the Lloyd shipping services. Due to the increasing sugar exports, it was suggested that six of the 12 annual services to Japan be rerouted to go directly to Japan, bypassing Bombay to reduce delays. Additionally, six new services were to be established to Rangoon, while the remaining services through Trieste, Fiume, Bombay, and Kobe

[744] Lines opened: Hong Kong 1881; Shanghai 1892; it took an average of 6-7 weeks to get goods to China (only in 1912 did an express service to Shanghai start, shortening the journey to about 30 days)
[745] Szuppán Vilmos (szerk.): *A Budapesti Kereskedelmi Akadémia 1857-1907 – Emlékkönyv az intézmény fönnállásának félszázados évfordulója alkalmából*. Bp., 1907.
[746] Magyar Országos Levéltár, Minisztertanácsi Jegyzőkönyvek, 1900. 12. 12.-15.

would remain unchanged. The Austrian Minister for Trade wanted the Hungarian government to reimburse the Suez Canal charges for the new direct services, based on Hungarian cargo usage, similar to the arrangement for Kobe services. The direct routes to Japan were intended to benefit Hungarian sugar exports, ensuring that not only the Austrian sugar industry would have gained exclusive advantage from these routes. Evidence of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's support for export activities can also be found in measures adopted for the Fifth Japanese National Industrial Exhibition, held in Osaka from March to July 1903. The railways of Austria, Hungary, and Bosnia and Herzegovina granted exhibitors a 50% reduction in freight charges for transporting exhibition goods by express and freight trains to and from the exhibition, with the discounted rates reimbursed retroactively.[747] The favorable conditions for transport were probably made possible by Hungarian involvement in overseas exhibition logistics. The story began when Artur Kuhn offered transportation services on behalf of the Kuhn and Komor company (established in Japan) for the event in Osaka, as this was the first Japanese exhibition to which international participants had been invited. Ultimately, the organizers signed a contract with them to handle international shipping.[748] (They also translated the catalog of the exhibition's fine art section into English.) This facilitated the export of some Hungarian goods and the presentation of Hungarian wines. Egri Bikavér (red wine) received a certificate of commendation. Additionally, Artur Belatiny, a sparkling wine producer from Velence in Fejér County, received a certificate of honor for his sparkling wines, as decided by the international jury.[749]

Another significant step in trade policy was the development and state support of Hungarian shipping. The navy of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was a joint institution (from 1889, also officially referred to as *Imperial and Royal, K.u.k., Cs. és Kir.*), but the merchant navy was administratively separate, meaning there was a distinct Hungarian maritime trade. The growth of Hungarian maritime trade during the Monarchy can be attributed to the modernization of the port of Fiume (now: Rijeka, Croatia) in the 1870s. Soon after, from 1890, state-subsidized free navigation helped the first Hungarian shipping company, the *Societa Anonima Ungherese di Armamento Marittimo Oriente (Oriente Hungarian Shipping Company; Oriente Magyar Tengerhajózási Társaság)*, benefited from state support. It became the second company in the Monarchy, alongside the Austrian

[747] Magyar Ipar, 1902-12-21
[748] The Strait Times, 1902-11-05, 1903-03-02
[749] Budapesti Hírlap, 1903-12-25

Lloyd, to operate long-range steamers for East Asian trade. They also suffered the greatest losses of the Hungarian merchant navy before the First World War. Together with Gábor Zsigmond, the author of this book researched the story of two of their ill-fated long-range ships using original sources.[750] This story, which unfolds during the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), was originally recounted by Iván Ferenc Kádár, a sea captain:

> "*The Russians, in order to have a supply of fuel by the time their ships reached Vladivostok, hired coal ships (...) which were sent in advance, well before the fleet departed. The ships were chartered by a London brokerage firm, Mac-George,*[751] *which, among other things, contacted the Hungarian shipping company 'Oriente' of Fiume, from whom two ships were chartered: the Burma and Siam. (...) The two ships loaded in Cardiff 4,000 tons of anthracite (85–95% pure coal, used only by warships) and set off on their semi-circumnavigation of the globe towards Vladivostok. After a twenty-day journey, they arrived in Hong Kong, where they bought food and water. On departure, they gave a false (!) destination: Kiaochou in China. But instead, they changed direction and bypassed Japan from the east. There, they crossed the Kunashiri Strait between Hokkaido and the Kuril Islands and headed for the Soya Strait. There, they intended to cross to Vladivostok. (...) The two captains, independently of each other, started to gamble and tried to break through between the two large Japanese islands of Hondo and Hokkaido, i.e., to cross Japanese territorial waters. It was because of this decision that Hungary lost two ships, both of which were intercepted by Japanese patrol boats and, after being found to be carrying contraband, the coal was confiscated along with the ships.*"[752]

On the confiscation of the ships, Kádár wrote:

> "*The officials of the Czar's Office of the Master of the Sea knew exactly that they were seeking ships for carrying contraband. With warships swarming between Japan and China, breaking the blockade – if it could even be called that – was risky. So they must have offered a hefty fare, and the Russian treasury could afford it. In London, the broker understood even better that the game was not for keeps, so they were clearly looking for an unwitting victim. In 1905, during the period of 'classical capitalism', late Onedin-like figures made fortunes in the free shipping business by*

[750] Tóth Gergely – Zsigmond Gábor: *Két magyar gőzös elkobzása az orosz-japán háború idején*. In: Aetas, 2011/I. pp. 78-91.
[751] Correct: Mann George
[752] Kádár F. Iván: *Két magyar hajó története 1905-ből*. In: Magyar Hajózás 2003. (Internet content, no longer available. Translated by the Author.)

going wherever the merchandise was. This is where the "Oriente" shipping company of Fiume came into the picture (...). They were not beginners; by 1905, they already owned six fully fledged seagoing vessels. What remains unclear is why they entered into a 'black' business, i.e., transporting goods for one of the two belligerents. It cannot be assumed that they acted out of incompetence. Clearly, the profit they were offered was substantial."[753]

Ferenc Kádár tells the whole story as follows:

"*Bulk cargo was already taken on by charter party, for a journey or for a period of time. It is almost certain that the Vladivostok shipment was undertaken 'on a voyage', for a lump sum of x pounds sterling, and this would have been at least double the price of a normal transaction. The most that could be attributed to this was an inadequate appreciation of the winter weather conditions, which was not entirely to be expected from the half-Hungarian, half-Italian captains used to the Adriatic (...) Incidentally, a careful perusal of the Welsh Coal Charter of Cardiff of 1896 – probably the type of contract used – reveals no express war clause, only a joint sharing of damages in this case. So (...) they had a loophole in case all the ropes were cut. Anyway, the ships were insured with Lloyd Triestino, whose conditions for war events were not very different from today's – i.e. they were not insured against war. Otherwise, it is questionable what cargo was declared at Lloyd's. (...) Burma sailed a week earlier than Siam. The captains probably received written instructions for the voyage, but it is also possible that they were loaded from Fiume to Cardiff and then (also) verbally briefed. The text would have been something like: 'Pick up 4000 tons of anthracite in Cardiff and take it to Vladivostok. Because of the Russo-Japanese war, this is considered contraband, so on departure from Hong Kong, give Kiaochou as your destination, but turn east out of sight and go around Japan to Vladivostok via the Soy Strait.' This instruction must have been given to both captains, because they acted in unison(!). Let us then try to put ourselves in the position of Captain Xigga and Captain Valentin: both were first-class captains with a sailing and steaming background. A ship of 3000 gross register tons was considered large and modern at the time, and to be in command of one was an honor. In addition to a good ship, they also had to have a good crew, with selected officers and especially Hungarian sailors and stokers. There must*

[753] Kádár F. Iván: *Két magyar hajó története 1905-ből*. In: Magyar Hajózás 2003. (Internet content, no longer available. Translated by the Author.)

have been a good deal of adventurous blood flowing through their veins at this time of free navigation, and it is unlikely that this was the first 'black' voyage they had made. They covered 240 miles a day on their way to Hong Kong without any problems and arrived in good time. There, they registered the wrong direction, and from then on, they could begin to get excited. I should also mention the navigation. As long-range officers, they had to be able to navigate anywhere in the world, and they did. Let's not forget that in 1905, maps were still very rudimentary, and there were few lighthouses to rely on, especially around Japan. It was a fine achievement even by today's standards; my hat's off to them. Meanwhile, the warships had to be watched. And then came the ice. What the two captains felt when they saw the ice wall – only they know… (...) Whether we look at the role of Xigga or Captain Valentin, they both experienced the same thing and made the same decision. So it is enough to talk about just one of them. Xigga may have been asleep, or he may have been having lunch when the sailor in the masthead compartment reported floating ice floes in front of the ship. He went up to the bridge and saw through his binoculars that ice was floating in the strait as far as the eye could see. By then, it was the 15th day since leaving Hong Kong. Half a month, listening to the roaring of the steam engine, weathering storms of all kinds, monotonously going on and on. The food got worse and worse (no fridge yet), salted meat, salted fish, wormy biscuits, and so on. Drinking water was running out, the rest was stale. If it hadn't been for the ice, the whole thing would have been over in two days – because they would have reached Vladivostok. Then, reality hit, and it was impossible to cross the Soya Strait. There was nothing to consider – they had to turn back. Xigga, now heading south, had two days to decide. He had no radio, so he was completely on his own. He had two choices: either he could break through between the two Japanese islands, or he could go around Japan again from below and cross up to Vladivostok on the other side, between Japan and China. The latter would have taken at least 10 days, for which there was neither food nor drinking water. We haven't even mentioned the coal supply, because their own coal must have been running low, and it was not appropriate to touch the cargo, although the captain could have done so in case of an emergency. It would have been no fun for the crew to haul coal from the bottom of the ship in buckets or baskets, carrying it back to the boiler's intake – 5-6 tons a day for a week. All this in, say, a storm in January. There have been riots on a ship for smaller things (...) We haven't talked about spies yet.

Japan had spies in every port, and they probably already knew in Cardiff where the two ships were going. But since the ships left Hong Kong, they could be sure that the two ships were already 'lurking' somewhere nearby. Presumably, they were already 'waiting' in the Tsugaru Strait (...) What could the captains have trusted? Perhaps that the Austro-Hungarian flag would protect them; after all, the Monarchy was a great power. They were wrong. The cost of the mistake: the Burma was captured at 9 p.m. on 25 January 1905, and the Siam at ten minutes to three on 31 January. The usual 'boarding party' went on board the ships (1 officer and 5-6 sailors with guns), interrogated the Captain, the First Officer, checked the logbook, the Hong Kong exit paper, and the Bill of Lading. They opened a cargo hold and examined the 'goods'. Then, despite all protests, the ships were seized and escorted to the nearest port. There, the ships were placed under lock and key (pending the verdict of the Court of Contraband) and the crew interned. The captains were allowed to inform the Consulate. The Japanese Ministry of War (!) provided us with the above information, adding that the director of the Oriente shipping company had contacted the Japanese Chargé d'Affaires in Fiume, Mr. Genzo Akiyama, through whom he had appealed to the Court of Contraband. Finally, the Japanese Supreme Court of Contraband, after 'careful investigation,' approved the confiscation order. Burma became Yesan Maru, and Siam became Erimo Maru. According to Lloyd's of London – from whom we also received details – the new owners of the ships became the 'state,' and they were later taken over by private companies and operated for more than 20 years. This also shows that they must have been really good ships; it's a pity. (Although we Hungarians could only have enjoyed them until 1919, when the peace treaty took away all the Hungarian ships in Fiume.) The Japanese Maritime University even provided data for the story, stating that the cases amounted to 'contraband of war' and that the confiscation was entirely justified. From this point on, the investigation is over, and what happened to the crew remains a mystery (they may have been put on the first ship to Europe, as was the custom at the time), nor do we know how the two captains got home, or whether any investigation was held by the Hungarian Maritime Authority in Fiume (because there was such an authority there). However, it can be assumed that in the naval battle of Tsushima on 27 May 1905, when the Japanese destroyed the Russian fleet that had circumnavigated half the world, the Japanese battleships

were fuelled by the very anthracite that the Russians had bought and that was transported to them by the Burma and Siam…"[754]

It is worth noting that before Vienna – while awaiting the positions of Paris and London – officially declared its neutrality in the Russo-Japanese War on 17 February 1904, the Hungarian Foreign Affairs Committee raised questions to Foreign Minister Goluchowski. One of these questions was: "*in what direction does the Monarchy wish to exercise neutrality, or more precisely, does it distinguish, in view of the fact that an Asian power is in conflict with a European power, between the different parts of the world, whether it maintains neutrality only in Asia or only in Europe, or whether it extends neutrality to both parts of the world?*" Goluchowski responded that "*the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy maintains the highest degree of neutrality, treats both powers equally, does not supply arms or food to either side, but may take other orders*".[755] The absurdity of the Dual Monarchy's situation and of European neutrality during the Russo-Japanese War prompted a mocking Hungarian poet to publish his poem in a newspaper in February 1904.

Semlegesség. Az európai államok kórusban éneklik	Neutrality. European nations are singing in unison
Itt Európában szanaszéjjel Mi minden népek s államok Persze a békét pártfogoljuk, Minthogy az üdvös állapot. Igaz, hogy közben elvitorláz Japán felé hajóhadunk De nem azért, hogy verekedjen — Mi semlegesek maradunk!	Here in Europe, scattered wide, All nations side by side abide, We praise the peace with earnest tone, A blessed state we claim our own. True, while we speak of peaceful charms, Our fleet is sailing off to arms, To distant Japan's shadowed shore – But fight? Oh no, we seek no war: We still remain neutral!
Szállítunk közben az orosznak Lőport, golyót meg kőszenet, Viszont Japánnak torpedócskát, Abból elég sohsem lehet. A yent s a rubelt elfogadjuk, Miért is szégyelnők magunk? Adunk egyformán ennek, annak — És semlegesek maradunk	We send supplies to Russia's hand, Gunpowder, coal, across the land; To Japan our torpedoes go, We sell them fast, and still they flow. We take the yen, we take the rubles, We trade with all, without troubles; To each we give, to all we deal – And neutral is the creed we feel
A csatornákat hol becsukjuk, Hol meg kinyitjuk szigorún S miközben fürgén mozgósítunk, Siránkozunk a háborún. Közben nehány békét sugárzó	Canals we close, canals we open wide, With strict command and changing tide; While troops are quickly mobilized, We mourn the wars we've not realized. And still we send, with peaceful pen,

[754] Kádár F. Iván: *Két magyar hajó története 1905-ből*. In: Magyar Hajózás 2003. (Online content, no longer available. Translated by the Author.)

[755] Szerdahelyi István: *Az orosz-japán háború és a magyar politikai közvélemény*
In: Tanulmányok a magyar-japán kapcsolatok történetéből, Bp., ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2009., pp. 50-51.

Nyilatkozatkát kiadunk, Hogy történjék most már akármi — Mi semlegesek maradunk.	Brief declarations now and then – So let what may befall, befall: We still remain neutral, all!
Mint semleges maradt a Svájc is És San-Marino, Monaco, (Ami mindkét fél érdekében Nagyon üdvösnek mondható), Mint semleges maradt a gallus, Ki újabb szövetségre les — És semleges volt Goluchowski, Szóval mindenki semleges.	Switzerland stands neutral still, Monaco and San Marino will; Each deems it wise, Each takes the cue, Where “neutral” is the proper view. Even the Gauls seek neutral gain – Goluchowski chants the same refrain.
Igaz, hogy készül Németország S már működik tán Anglia S vasútat rongál a kinézer, Ázsia legsárgább fia, Azonban ettől eltekintve Közös az elv s az akarat, Hogy valamennyi egytől-egyig Tovább is semleges marad.	Germany prepares her might, England stirs in smoke of fight, Yellow sons of the East, the Chinese, Destroy all the rails without cease; Yet through it all, one truth we share, A single will is everywhere: That all of them, both near and far, Shall stay neutral as they are.
Mert semlegesek lenni hasznos, Mert semlegesnek lenni jó, Öröm nekünk, hogy ölik egymást Szentpétervár és Tokió. Mert reménységünk van, hogy ott, hol Nem is vetettünk — aratunk, Kerüljön vérbe, háborúba, Mi semlegesek maradunk!	Neutrality is wise and bright, Neutrality brings pure delight; We smile to see them clash and bleed – St. Petersburg and Tokyo’s deed. Hope remains where none have sown – We harvest what we have not grown; Let war break out, let blood be drawn We stay neutral, marching on![756]

It is indisputable that the Russo-Japanese War provided some business opportunities under the veil of neutrality, but at the same time it also boosted both the Austrian and Hungarian sides’ efforts to further improve their foreign trade results. In 1905, the Minister of Trade sent Gyula Pirnitzer (1876–?), a trade expert, on a mission to India, China, and Japan. Pirnitzer likely visited Japan between 1906 and 1907.[757] Diplomatically, from 1909 onwards, there was an increasing tendency to appoint commercial diplomats.[758] In 1909, Baron Gyula Szilassy, the newly appointed embassy counsellor in Tokyo, emphasized the importance of trade development in one of his notes. The memo was titled *The Situation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Japan*.[759] In it, he argued that the Dual Monarchy's economic position in East Asia needed strengthening, even though Austria-Hungary and Japan were not priority partners for each other. (It is worth noting that this topic has long been a recurring issue, making it understandable that a newly appointed

[756] Translated by the Author.
[757] *Vendéglősök Lapja*, 1905. április 20., p. 4.
[758] 島田昌幸『オーストリア=ハンガリー外交における日本の位置付け―ボスニア併合危機期を中心に(1908-1909)』In: 法学政治学論究, 第62号, 2004.9., p. 207.
[759] *Die Stellung Oesterreich-Ungarn’s in Ost-Asien*, 1909. Feb. 25.

diplomat would prioritize boosting the meagre foreign trade as an initial focus.) Despite these efforts, the problem of foreign trade remained unresolved. In 1906, a meeting focusing on Hungarian exports to Japan was held at the Museum of Commerce. Attendees included representatives of major Hungarian industrial and commercial companies that were already in contact with Japan. The meeting concluded with a proposal submitted to the minister, summarizing the issues discussed and outlining the measures deemed necessary.[760] By 1910, Ödön Palotay of Várpalota, Honorary Consul of the Imperial Japanese Consulate in Budapest, was still highlighting the unfulfilled potential of trade relations:

> "*Japan is flooding the world with its fabulous silks, industrial and engineering goods, and other manufactures; why should we have to buy them second-hand at great expense when we can obtain them directly at a lower price? Or why, in spite of the high import duties, do we seek a market in the West for the surplus of our raw materials – our world-famous flour and wine, our machines of the highest perfection, and our chemical products – when the way is open to us through Fiume, and the ideal market for them is there, in Japan? (...) It is entirely up to us if we lose the Japanese market for our products and manufactured goods. Besides East Indian sugar, Hungarian sugar products will always be competitive, and the world-famous Hungarian flour, Hungarian wine, and champagne will find a favourable market in Japan. Other valuable exports could include fine steel products, machinery and machine parts, light automobile engines, bicycles, chemicals and dyes, animal products, agricultural machinery, and especially electrical engineering and instruments, for which Japan cannot meet its ever-increasing domestic demand. Additionally, wool and cotton yarn, which Japan also needs to import, represent easily marketable exports.*"[761]

Palotay went into more detail on foreign trade with Japan for the period 1904-1908:

> "*With regard to Japan's commercial relations with our country, we regret to report that over the past five years, these relations have significantly weakened, even though Japan has previously been a favourable market for our agricultural and principal industrial products. (...) Since 1904, our imports have decreased by 51%. Although our exports have risen compared to 1904, the figures for the following year*

[760] Magyar Ipar, 1906-03-11

[761] Várpalotai Palotay Ödön: *Japán közgazdasága.* Budapesti Japán Császári Konzulátus, Budapest, 1910., Előszó; pp. 59-60. Translated by the Author.

show a substantial decline of about 60%. This drop cannot be attributed solely to a decrease in Japanese consumption capacity but is rather a consequence of trade conditions in Hungary. Among imports, the decline is particularly noticeable in rice, pharmaceuticals, wood and bone products, and clay and porcelain. Similarly, exports have fallen sharply for sugar, agricultural products, fats, and ironmongery. Over the past two years, our imports of rice from Japan have entirely ceased. The same applies to sugar exports, despite these two commodities being among the most traded items over the past decade. External trade in these two articles has undergone a significant transformation in the last 10 years."[762]

Left: the Austro-Hungarian Consulate building in Yokohama, c. 1906-08; Right: on the glass-enclosed porch of the Austro-Hungarian consulate, a Japanese woman is sewing a kimono for Ottília Márkus to take back to Europe (Új Idők)

The Austro-Hungarian legation building, c. 1899. (designed by Josiah Conder, one of the most renowned British architects working in Japan at the time)

[762] Várpalotai Palotay Ödön: *Japán közgazdasága.* Budapesti Japán Császári Konzulátus, Budapest, 1910., Előszó; pp. 59-60. Translated by the Author.

The Austro-Hungarian Embassy building in Tokyo in 1912 (the building no longer exists and is now the southern part of the Sophia University campus)

Diplomatic relations, diplomatic missions

Diplomatic and trade relations were hindered by the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's prolonged lack of a local consul or envoy in Japan. For an extended period, China held greater importance to the Monarchy, with the Consul General stationed in Shanghai, representing the Monarchy in three countries simultaneously – China, Japan, and Siam – while shuttling between embassies. After the conclusion of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), Austria-Hungary began reorganizing its diplomatic representation in East Asia. In 1896, a decision was made to separate the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic missions for China and Japan and to establish an Austro-Hungarian legation in Beijing. The diplomatic importance of East Asia to the Monarchy needs to be kept in perspective; indeed, it would be more accurate to speak of the relative unimportance of its East Asian diplomatic representations. The Austro-Hungarian Imperial and Royal legation in China, at that time, was definitely in a low rank within the empire's diplomatic network. But interestingly, the task of organizing the Chinese legation was at the hands of the Monarchy's Tokyo legation in Japan. On March 20, 1897, a plot of land was purchased. The six-month delay in finalizing the purchase was mainly due to the Chinese authority responsible for foreign affairs, which had to approve all documentation. Construction began but faced numerous obstacles until the Monarchy’s Chinese legation building was finally completed in early 1899, with special attention paid to its representative appearance both inside and out. In 1900, anti-foreign sentiment escalated into what became known as the Boxer Rebellion. Because the Austro-Hungarian embassy stood apart from the main cluster of foreign legations in the Diplomatic Quarter, it was among the first to be threatened. On June 20, the staff evacuated to the safety of the Diplomatic Quarter and

burned the embassy archives before leaving. The grand building was left abandoned and was destroyed by fire during the night of July 21–22, 1900.[763]

Building on the excellent work of diplomatic historian Éva Somogyi,[764] the Monarchy's foreign service was divided into two distinct bodies: the ***consular*** and ***diplomatic*** corps. **Diplomats** represented not only the Monarchy as a whole but also the Hungarian state and its citizens. Hungarian diplomats often saw themselves as representatives of both the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and their Hungarian identity. A distinctive feature of the Monarchy's system was that diplomats stationed abroad had minimal involvement in shaping the Empire's foreign policy and exercised only limited influence over substantive decisions. Their roles were largely confined to mediation and reporting rather than policymaking. Furthermore, the common foreign minister strictly prohibited diplomats from representing the specific interests of either Austria or Hungary, requiring them to act solely on behalf of the Empire as a unified entity. The vast majority of the Monarchy's diplomats were of noble, often aristocratic, background. Only 10% of the envoys and ambassadors representing the Monarchy until 1918 were not from the highest ranks of society, and even their names often included the prefix "von," indicating noble origin. The hierarchy of diplomatic ranks was as follows: ambassador, envoy, 1st class councilor, 2nd class councilor, embassy secretary, attaché, and office secretary. The Monarchy's budget did not fully cover the expenses incurred by envoys or ambassadors. Diplomats were considered personal representatives of Franz Joseph at foreign courts, and the emperor preferred financially independent individuals for these roles. Consequently, diplomats often used their private wealth for representation, a practice both acknowledged and, to some extent, expected by the Dual Monarchy. Alongside this expectation, they received a regular operating/activity allowance in addition to their salary. In high-ranking positions between 1873 and 1900, this allowance frequently exceeded their base salary many times over. During this period, the following salary structure was in effect: *Ambassadors*: annual salary of 8,400 forints, plus an allowance of 41,600–53,600 forints; *Envoys*: annual salary of 6,300 forints, plus an allowance of 8,700–19,700 forints; *1st Class Embassy Counselors*: annual salary of 4,200 forints, plus an allowance of 2,500–4,000 forints; *2nd Class Embassy Counselors*: annual salary of 2,500 forints, plus an allowance of 2,000–3,000 forints; *Embassy Secretaries*: annual salary of 1,800 forints,

[763] Adam Cabiš: *Rakousko-Uhersko A Čína – Diplomatické Vztahy Dvou Císařství V Letech 1896–1911*. M.A. Thesis, 2012. pp. 19-21.; 34.
[764] Somogyi Éva: *Magyarok a bécsi hivatalnokvilágban – A közös külügyminisztérium magyar tisztviselői 1867-1914*, Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, 2017.

plus an allowance of 2,000–4,400 forints. While the salaries were fixed, the allowances varied based on local conditions. These included the extent of required representation, the size of the embassy staff, the cost of living in the city, and whether the embassy operated in a rented building. To contextualize these figures, it is important to understand the income standards of the time. Around 1900, a lower-middle-class lifestyle required an annual income of approximately 1,000–2,200 forints, while an upper-middle-class lifestyle required 2,200–3,600 forints. Membership in the upper class began at an annual income of roughly 6,000 forints. Notably, the purchasing power of these incomes was stable, as there was no inflation in the Kingdom of Hungary between 1873 and 1900.[765] Alongside the well-recorded payments, the salaries of Japanese personnel in the diplomatic service of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy remain poorly documented. In 1907, servants (*amtsdiener*) earned 20 to 25 yen per month, while interpreters received 80 yen. Two letters from 1910 and 1911 concerning the employment of staff members and their wages have survived:

"*Yokohama 34. Yokohama den 6. Juli 1910. 51335 pr: 11 VIII 1910*

I have the honor to respectfully report that Tokijiro KOMATSUBARA, a clerk who has been employed in this office since July 1904, has resigned due to advanced age and chronic illness. I have therefore dismissed him and replaced him with Toyokichi SHIINA, a Japanese national previously employed as a clerk in a commercial office, who, like his predecessor, will receive a monthly salary of 20 yen.

Consul Koller"[766]

"*Yokohama 34. No. XXIII/Adm. Geg. Yokohama, den 1. juli 1911. 47853 pr: 20. VII 1911*

Your Excellency, the Count,

The former steward, Shiina, to whom this office's Report No. XXIII of 1910 referred, was dismissed at the beginning of January of this year on the grounds of unsuitability. He was replaced by Yonekichi HIRONO; however, in light of the notorious unreliability of Japanese domestic staff, I did not hire him permanently

[765] Somogyi Éva: *Magyarok a bécsi hivatalnokvilágban – A közös külügyminisztérium magyar tisztviselői 1867-1914*, Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, 2017. p. 7., 51., 53., 61., 114., 162., 242., 244-245

[766] Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, PA XXX. F8., 257.

right away but initially on a 6-month probationary basis. Since he has proven himself to be conscientious and reliable during this probationary period, which has now expired, I have formally hired him today and respectfully request your gracious approval of this measure. Hirono is 50 years old, has good references, and, like his predecessor, receives a monthly wage of 20 yen, which is paid to him in advance installments after deduction of a stamp duty of 11 sen.

Consul Koller"[767]

A few records from 1907 and the early 1910s have survived in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv among the materials of the Yokohama Consulate. These include maintenance costs (for example, the purchase of a typewriter in Yokohama, for which 250 yen was paid for an Underwood No. 5 model). The reports mainly concern embassy expenditures, but they also list the names of Japanese employees of the Yokohama Consulate, including even the rickshaw coolies. The materials also include consulate inventories.[768] Establishing exact figures for the early salaries and expenditures of the consulate in Japan, a contemporary source notes that, well before the 1869 East Asian Expedition had reached Japan, in August 1869 a subcommittee proposal for the Austro-Hungarian Joint Ministry of Foreign Affairs revised an original allocation of 60,000 forints intended to support consulates in China and Japan for 1870. For the Yokohama consulate, the subcommittee's counterproposal included a detailed breakdown consisting of 1,600 forints for the consular salary, 1,600 forints for operating costs, 6,000 forints for a cost-of-living allowance, 3,000 forints for an interpreter, and 5,000 forints for office rent, totaling 17,200 forints. In addition, it allocated 1,000 forints for extraordinary expenses such as travel and equipment, and 28,000 forints for the overall redesign of consular flags, coats of arms, and seals. Altogether, these Yokohama-related expenditures amounted to 18,200 forints, despite the original 30,000-forint allocation for Japan.[769]

[767] Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, PA XXX. F8., 257.
[768] Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, PA XXX. F8., 257.
[769] Pesti Napló, 1869-08-03.

The building of the consulate in Yokohama with the flag, the interior and the Japanese staff working at the consulate (HHStA)

The **consul**, who worked alongside diplomats, was responsible for protecting and assisting citizens of their country and fostering trade and economic relations between the sending and receiving countries. Therefore, consular service differed in nature from the diplomatic service: while diplomats represented the ruler and, by extension, the empire, consuls focused on representing the interests of the state and its citizens. The institution of consulship emerged alongside the development of international trade relations. The joint Ministry of Foreign Affairs was more lenient with consuls when they represented the specific interests of either Austria or Hungary – an exception not permitted for diplomats. Being a consul was primarily considered a civilian rather than an aristocratic occupation. Over time, however, the consular service gradually shed its socially inferior status, making it easier for consuls to transition into the diplomatic service. Nonetheless, the social distinction between the consular and diplomatic services remained pronounced in the Monarchy for a significant period. Under the terms of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, foreign trade policy was recognized as a matter of common interest, occasionally negotiated by the two national governments. Although the appointment of consuls fell under the jurisdiction of the joint foreign minister, the consulates had considerable freedom to advocate for the specific commercial interests of Austria or Hungary. In these activities, the trade ministries of both nations had the authority to intervene when necessary.[770]

The political demand to employ a greater number of Hungarians in the diplomatic service, in line with the principles of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, first emerged in 1892. This requirement was not necessarily based on nationality but rather on citizenship. From the turn of the century onward, Hungarian governments increasingly advocated for a

[770] Somogyi Éva: *Magyarok a bécsi hivatalnokvilágban – A közös külügyminisztérium magyar tisztviselői 1867-1914*, Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, 2017. pp. 59-61., 64., 108.

higher representation of Hungarians among diplomats. Consequently, a candidate's nationality became an increasingly significant factor – both formally and informally – in appointments and promotions. The proportion of Hungarian envoys and ambassadors within the Monarchy's foreign missions reflected this shift. While Hungarians accounted for approximately 8.7% of diplomats in 1868, this figure rose to 46.7% by 1917.[771] Consuls, envoys, and ambassadors of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy were trained in Vienna at the Imperial and Royal Consular Academy, or *Konsularakademie*. The institution was initially established in 1754 by Empress Maria Theresa under the name *Orientalischen Akademie* (*Oriental Academy*), with the aim of preparing young diplomats for service abroad on behalf of the Habsburg Empire. Future diplomats were prepared to defend the Monarchy's commercial interests, and the curriculum was structured accordingly: it included both language and professional courses, with greater emphasis on the latter. The Academy's training program was divided into 'Western' and 'Eastern' tracks, with special attention given to subjects offering specialized knowledge and practical skills. These mainly comprised courses in commerce, law, and political science, supplemented by language instruction. Completing the full academic program required five years of study. By the end of the 1890s, the Western track included 12 to 14 hours of specialized instruction and 11 to 12 hours of language study per week. The Eastern track had a similar number of specialized instruction hours but offered 15 to 19 hours of language training weekly. Chinese and Japanese language courses became part of the colloquium at the end of the 19th century. As Austria-Hungary's involvement in China grew, a shortage of qualified interpreters proficient in Chinese for diplomatic purposes became increasingly apparent. To address this issue, the K. u. K. Konsularakademie launched a restructured Chinese language program in 1897. Initially, there was little interest in this program due to high tuition fees, so the Austro-Hungarian Imperial and Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to partially subsidize the courses.[772] The five-semester intensive course was designed as preparatory training, aimed at equipping students to continue their studies in China under the guidance of local scholars, preferably from the legations or Chinese academic circles.[773] In the case of Japanese, it was not easy to find a teacher in Vienna at the time. This issue was resolved by the staff of the Japanese Legation in Vienna, who – at the

[771] Somogyi Éva: *Magyarok a bécsi hivatalnokvilágban – A közös külügyminisztérium magyar tisztviselői 1867-1914*, Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, 2017. pp. 90-91., 202.
[772] Pesti Napló, 1896-06-12
[773] Adam Cabiš: *Rakousko-Uhersko A Čína – Diplomatické Vztahy Dvou Císařství V Letech 1896–1911*. M.A. Thesis, 2012. Pp. 23-24.

request of the Monarchy's joint foreign ministry – took on the teaching.[774] In 1904, the Academy finally received its own dedicated building after having relocated several times. The new facility met all institutional needs, featuring four lecture halls, seminar rooms, dormitories, steam heating, and electric lighting. It also included ample common spaces, such as a scientifically reorganized library, a billiard room, and an in-house restaurant. The Academy reached its peak during this period, with around 50 active students enrolled each academic year.[775]

Until the First World War, three Hungarians served as ministers representing the Monarchy in Japan (from late 1907 onward, as ambassadors). The first was Béla Ambró Adamóci, who held the position of minister extraordinary and plenipotentiary from 1901 to 1909 and later became ambassador. Following him, László Szentgyörgyi-Müller served as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary from 1912 to 1914. Notably, Szentgyörgyi-Müller gained sympathy from the Japanese press in 1914 at the outbreak of the war.[776] In addition to these high-ranking diplomats, several Hungarians held lower positions within the mission. Aladár Flesch served as consul in Yokohama from 1895 to 1900, while Domokos Szathmáry-Király was consul general there between 1904 and 1908. Béla Szentirmay of Darvastó, succeeded him as consul general in Yokohama from 1912 to 1914. Baron Gyula Szilassy acted as deputy ambassador and counselor from 1908 to 1909, and Béla Dáni de Gyarmata served as military attaché from 1905 to 1910.[777] Not every Hungarian diplomat destined for Japan would actually set foot in the country. One such case was Nikolaus Kiss von Ittebe, who was unable to take up his appointed post. He was assigned to the consular post in Yokohama by decree on April 25, 1898, but he never took up the position.[778] At that time, he was already deeply in debt from gambling and financial misconduct and was trying to avoid legal consequences and imprisonment. Shortly after the assignment, he spent most of 1898 on recuperation leave in Europe, effectively delaying his departure. He ultimately avoided the transfer by requesting

[774] Tefner Zoltán: *Hogyan tanítottak nyelvet a bécsi Keleti Akadémián?* In: Háda B. (szerk.): *Nemzetek és birodalmak. Diószegi István 80 éves.* ELTE, Új- és Jelenkori Egyetemes Történeti Tanszék, Budapest, 2010. p. 634.
[775] Kisling Zénó: *A bécsi diplomataképzés történetének rövid összefoglalása*. In: Külügyi Műhely 2 (2). 2020. pp. 205-206.
[776] 朝日新聞, 1914. aug. 28.
[777] The position of military attaché was established after the Russo-Japanese War. For a detailed list, see the ***Appendix***. Further details about the Monarchy's foreign representation, appointments, and exact dates of mandates in the period between 1869-1883: 川崎晴朗『明治時代の東京にあった外国公館（2）』In: 外務省調査月報　2012/No. 1. pp. 52-56.
[778] In some cases, foreign postings were used to remove problematic individuals from the domestic scene while keeping them nominally employed. Patronage and bureaucratic inertia played a major role, allowing personal connections, delays, and reluctance to cause scandal to keep people in circulation. (His great-uncle, Ernő von Kiss, was a Hungarian national hero who was executed in 1849 in Arad.)

dismissal from civil service on March 31, 1899, citing health reasons, though this was not granted. As a result, despite being formally appointed to Yokohama, he never served there and remained in Europe under various leave arrangements until he was later reassigned to other consular posts once his debts were temporarily resolved.[779]

A diplomatic idyll in 1895 aboard the corvette Aurora: Heinrich Coudenhove-Kalergi and His Wife Mitsuko (private collection)

The Monarchy's diplomatic representation (legation) in Tokyo was elevated to an embassy at the end of 1907, following the Russo-Japanese War (1905) and the British decision to raise their diplomatic corps to ambassadorial rank in 1906.[780] Alongside the embassy, a consulate had been operating in Yokohama since 1876. In contrast, it is worth noting that Spain did not consider elevating its legation in Tokyo to an embassy, unlike several other countries. It maintained its diplomatic mission at the legation level for a

[779] Engelbert Deusch: *Die effektiven Konsuln Österreich(-Ungarns) von 1825–1918*. Böhlau Verlag, Köln, 2017. pp. 384-385.

[780]島田昌幸『オーストリア=ハンガリー外交における日本の位置付け―ボスニア併合危機期を中心に(1908-1909)』In: 法学政治学論究, 第62号, 2004.9, pp. 206-207.

considerably long period – until 1952.[781] In a twist of fate, Spain became the bridge between Hungary and Japan when it appointed its chief diplomatic representative to Tokyo on 8 October 1915. On that day, José Caro y Széchényi was appointed as Spain's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Japan. Born into a distinguished family, he was the son of Pedro Caro y Álvarez de Toledo, 5th Marquis of La Romana, and Countess Erzsébet Széchényi de Sárvár et Felsővidék. Through his mother, he was connected to the prominent Hungarian Széchényi family; his uncle, Count Pál Széchényi, had served as Hungary's Minister of Agriculture, Industry, and Trade from 1882 to 1889. During José Caro y Széchényi's tenure in Japan – a time of significant geopolitical change – the Spanish Legation in Tokyo is said to have handled Hungarian affairs, possibly owing to his Hungarian noble ancestry.

The consulates of the Dual Monarchy were more than administrative outposts; they were visual statements of a state perpetually negotiating its own identity. Although the flag itself cannot be discerned in the photograph of the Yokohama consulate reproduced below (taken in 1893?), contemporary evidence suggests that Austro-Hungarian consulates flew a flag symbolising the Dual Monarchy, introduced in 1869. The flag featured three horizontal stripes: red at the top, white in the middle, and a split red and green stripe at the bottom. On the left side, it bore a red-white-red coat of arms beneath a stylized crown, while the Hungarian small coat of arms appeared on the right. One study highlights a key difference in flag displays between consulates and embassies. Unlike consulates, embassies displayed three flags: the black-yellow flag of Austria, the red-white-green flag of Hungary, and a 'dynastic' flag. The dynastic flag featured a yellow field bordered by black-white-red-gold triangles, with a black double-headed eagle at its center.[782]

[781] Rubén Bartolomé Sopena: *Las relaciones diplomáticas hispano-japonesas en el marco del conflicto rusojaponés (1904-1905)*. In: Mirai. Estudios Japoneses 3, 2019. pp. 93-110. https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/mira.63195

[782] Varga Bálint: *Egy össze nem álló kép mozaikjai Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia dualitásának kortárs reprezentációja* IN: AETAS 32. évf. 2017. 4., pp. 9-10.

The Austro-Hungarian Consulate building in Yokohama in 1893(?). In the window, Consul Gustav Kreitner and his wife are seen, with their child.

In the early 1900s, Hungarian traveller Benedek Balogh Barátosi attempted to reach the "Hungarian legation" in Tokyo, even before the Austro-Hungarian mission had been elevated to embassy status. He described the considerable difficulties he encountered in what initially seemed a simple enough undertaking:

> "*When I settled in Tokyo for a few months, I wanted to pay a visit to our envoy, as usual. (...) I started asking about the Hungarian legation. The extremely courteous Japanese innkeeper spent half a day searching for the address, bringing along about ten people, even a police officer. After a long discussion, they turned to me with the question: (...) 'Where is Hungary?' It was only when I finally mentioned Austria that the desired address was promptly provided. 'Yes! Austria, that's different!' was the reply. The hired kurumaya, who had never heard of Hungary, then carried me to Austria with the utmost care. In Kojimachiku, Kioicho, a magnificent palace stood on a hilltop, surrounded by a beautiful park. Above the gate was a double-headed eagle; on the two flagpoles of the palace flew black-yellow and red-white flags. Above the door of the official room was a large gilded double-headed eagle, and all official documents were bound with a black-yellow ribbon. (...) The Hungarian coat of arms should be placed alongside the legation signs, Hungary's name should appear next to Austria's, and the Hungarian tricolor*

should be flown on the building – or else my Hungarian homeland should not waste millions on its own disgrace in the realm of common foreign policy."[783]

The above personal experience of a Hungarian traveler aligns well with a document held in the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, titled *A Notice Concerning the Naming of Austria-Hungary from the Envoy of the Same Country* (墺地利洪牙利ナル名称ニ関シ同国公使ヨリ申牒一件). The document states that in 1902, the Austro-Hungarian Envoy stationed in Japan formally protested to the Japanese government – acting on instructions from his home country – because official Japanese documents referred to the state simply as 'Austria', which was not its correct official name.

The movements of the Monarchy's Tokyo legation were almost untraceable, with the diplomatic corps temporarily stationed at eight different locations between 1875 and 1898. The history of finding a permanent location for the legation has been examined by several Japanese researchers, including Seiro Kawasaki and Masayuki Shimada. Documents from the Japanese Foreign Ministry reveal that the first official attempt to secure a suitable location for the legation in Tokyo dates back to 1871. At that time, László Hengelmüller informed the Japanese Foreign Ministry that they had rented an uninhabited church in the Mita district of Tokyo.[784] However, the ministry recommended selecting a more appropriate site and proposed two alternatives. One of these options was accepted by the Monarchy's representatives, and negotiations began for the purchase of the area. For unknown reasons, this process was interrupted in 1872.[785] It was not until three years later, in 1875, that a permanent residence was finally purchased in the Tsukiji area.[786] The building had previously belonged to Oscar Heeren, a German merchant from Hamburg and the Peruvian consul, and the Peruvian embassy was also located there. The first permanent legation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was short-lived, as it was completely destroyed in a fire in November 1876.[787] After the fire, the legation was forced to take refuge in the house of Arinori Mori, the Chinese envoy, in Kobiki-chō.[788] They then had to search for a new location, and in 1878, the Tokyo city government purchased a property in Kioi-chō,

[783] Barátosi Balogh Benedek: *Dai Nippon I*., 1906., p. 479. Translated by the Author
[784] DRO, RMFA (3.12.1.14), No. 1. Hengelmüller to Machida, 1871.01.01.; the name of the temple was *Gankaiji* (願海寺), cited by: Shimada Masayuki: *The Austro-Hungarian Embassy (Legation) in Tokyo* (1869-1914). p. 13.
[785] Siebold's correspondence with the Japanese Foreign Ministry on this matter: DRO, RMFA (3.12.1.14) No. 6, 14, 22
[786] the address was: 築地居留地31,32番地
[787] Shimada Masayuki: *The Austro-Hungarian Embassy (Legation) in Tokyo* (1869-1914). p. 14.; 川崎晴朗『築地外国人居留地―明治時代の東京にあった「外国」』雄松堂, 2002, pp. 68-73.
[788] Arinori Mori (森有礼); Kobiki-cho (木挽町); correspondence with the Japanese Foreign Ministry on this matter: DRO, RMFA (3.12.1.14) No. 32

which the legation rented.[789] Many years passed before the embassy could be built on this site, which had originally served as a garden for tea ceremonies. Since no building was immediately available, the legation was temporarily stationed in Yokohama until 1879, before relocating to Nagata-chō Icchōme No. 19, where it remained from 1879 to 1883.[790] In 1881, Maximilian Hoffer von Hoffenfels petitioned the Japanese authorities to expand the Kioi-chō property. The newly paved road next to the site would have made it impractical to construct the main gate of the future building, and expanding the area would have allowed for a more advantageous placement of the gate. The property was subsequently expanded multiple times, reaching a total area of 9,875 m² by 1904.[791] The legation's building was finally constructed on the property in 1898.[792] The chaotic period of relocations from 1884 until the final settlement in Kioi-chō is summarized in the table below:

Year of move (reason)	Address	Original owner of property
1884 (?)	Shiba-ku, Mita, Tsunamachi No. 9. (芝区、三田、綱町) in other references: Koyama-cho (小山町)	Mochiaki Hachisuka (蜂須賀茂韶) politician
1887 (due to the owner moving home)	Shiba-ku, Shirokaneshida-cho, No. 15. (芝区、白金志田町)	
1888 (?)	Akasaka-ku, Aoi-cho No. 3. (赤坂区、葵町), also referred to as Yamato-yashiki (大和屋敷)	Kihachiro Okura (大蔵喜八郎), millionaire entrepreneur
1890 (the Yamato-yashiki proved to be too small)	Kojimachi-ku, Kami-nibancho, No. 15.	Shuzo Aoki (青木周蔵), former Japanese ambassador to Vienna
1893 (?)	Ushigome, Nando-cho, No. 26. (牛込納戸町)	Nobuyoshi Kaieda (海江田信義), politician
1897 Apr. 26. (?) [793]	Kojimachi-ku, Kami-nibancho, No. 15.	
1898 Aug. 10. (the legation's building was completed in July 1898.)	Kojimachi-ku, Kioi-cho	

The circumstances surrounding the purchase of land in Tokyo for a dedicated diplomatic building for the Dual Monarchy are known from contemporary sources. A Hungarian article from 1897 reveals that a plot of land for an Austro-Hungarian legation in Tokyo was granted by the Japanese government in 1878 and expanded in 1890 and 1896. However,

[789] 紀尾井町, Kojimachi-ku, No. 3.; correspondence with the Japanese Foreign Ministry on this matter: DRO, RMFA (3.12.1.14) No. 35, 50, 64.; Shimada Masayuki: *The Austro-Hungarian Embassy (Legation) in Tokyo* (1869-1914). p. 17.
[790] 永田町、一丁目
[791] DRO, RMFA (3.12.1.112-2) Wydenbruck's letter to Okuma, 1896. okt. 26., and Okuma's response
[792] DRO, RMFA (3.12.1.14) draft rental agreement. 1896. Nov. 20. Tokyo.
[793] DRO, RMFA (6.1.3.1) 在本邦各国公使館設置移転関係雑件

construction was repeatedly delayed by the Austro-Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to save money. Over time, Tokyo's rapid growth caused land values to rise, and the Japanese government began pressing for development, noting that other foreign powers had already built embassies on similar plots. Fearing the loss of the site and reputational disadvantage, the Austro-Hungarian ministry finally decided to begin preliminary construction work funded from reserve resources. The full cost of building and furnishing the embassy was estimated at about 150,000 forints.[794] One question naturally arises from this: why did it take so long to establish a permanent location for the Austro-Hungarian Empire's legation in Tokyo? Seiro Kawasaki's study may offer some clues to answering this question.[795] The forced relocations that occurred outside cases of force majeure can be attributed to the conditions of the time. Foreign diplomatic corps arriving in Japan prior to the Monarchy were restricted to settling in areas designated for foreigners in Yokohama until the early 1870s, as Tokyo only opened to foreign settlement in January 1869. This gave Yokohama certain advantages over the capital: diplomats considered it the center of foreign social life, deemed much safer than Tokyo, and often preferred to commute between the two cities. Additionally, while Tokyo lacked hotels meeting Western standards until around 1890 (except for a few establishments near Tsukiji), Yokohama boasted several such hotels, which were sometimes used for legation receptions, balls, and even as residences. Starting in the mid-1870s, the major powers with a presence in Japan began exploring the possibility of relocating their legations to the capital, with plans to construct new Western-style buildings. At that time, in 1874, approximately 90% of foreign legations were still located in Yokohama. The design of the Austro-Hungarian legation building in Kioi-chō was entrusted to the renowned English architect Josiah Conder, who had also designed the German legation building. The structure was a two-story Renaissance-style house with a beautiful garden, said to bear some resemblance to the German legation, though it was reportedly more grandiose.[796] In June 1914, Ambassador László Szentgyörgyi-Müller initiated the construction of a new wing to the building, but the project remained incomplete due to the outbreak of World War I.

The primary responsibility of the diplomats heading the Japanese legation (later the embassy) of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was to monitor Tsarist Russia. The Monarchy shared a border with Russia in Eastern Europe, and the two empires were increasingly at

[794] Magyar Ujság, 1897-11-17
[795] 川崎晴朗「明治時代の東京にあった外国公館(2)」In.: 外務省調査月報 2012/No. 1. 43-44., p. 46.
[796] 河東義之編『ジョサイア・コンドル建築図面集II』中央公論美術出版, 1981, Tokyo, p. 39.

odds over Balkan issues.[797] Alongside this task, the diplomats observed, from a neutral standpoint, developments on the Korean Peninsula, which Japan had designated as a protectorate in 1905 and later annexed in 1910. Notably, their diplomatic reports of the time expressed unusual sympathy and regret regarding these events. The Monarchy signed its Treaty of Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation with Korea in Tokyo on 23 June 1892, initially recognizing Korea as an independent state. It remains unclear whether this position shifted after the annexation; there is no precise information on whether the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy officially accepted Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910.[798] What is certain is that Austria-Hungary never opened an embassy or established a consulate in Korea. Instead, diplomatic matters were consistently managed by the German consul on behalf of the Monarchy.

The Embassy building and entrance from Kioi-zaka

[797] Dr. Karoly Fendler: *Austro-Hungarian Archival Sources of Korean History (1884-1910)*. In: Seoul Journal of Korean Studies, 2007., pp. 223-224.
[798] Dr. Karoly Fendler: *Austro-Hungarian Archival Sources of Korean History (1884-1910)*. In: Seoul Journal of Korean Studies, 2007., p. 231.

Floor plan of the Embassy

Unfortunately, there has been little research on the representative events organized by the Austro-Hungarian legation in Tokyo or the consulate in Yokohama. One recurring occasion was the annual celebration of Emperor Franz Joseph I's birthday on 18 August. We can catch a glimpse of one such celebration in 1887 through a British newspaper article:

> *"The 18th of August being the anniversary of the birth of the Emperor Franz Josef I. of Austria, the men-of-war in harbour dressed ship, and a reception was held by H. von Siebold, the Austro-Hungarian Charge d'Affaires in Tokyo. Mass was celebrated in the French church at Yokohama, and attended by the Austrian Consul and the officers and crew of the Austrian corvette Aurora. In the evening H. von Siebold invited all his countrymen to a banquet at the Grand Hotel, at which the health of the Emperor was proposed by the Charge d'Affaires, and was duly honoured by the assembled guests."*[799]

[799] London and China Telegraph. Monday 03 October 1887.

In 1894, most probably without awareness of its subsequent historical significance, the head of the Austro-Hungarian Legation reportedly took part in a performance of Act 1 of *Faust* at the Tokyo Music School (東京音楽学校, now the Tokyo University of the Arts). A member of the Italian embassy sang Faust, and the minister of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Count Heinrich von Coudenhove-Kalergi, performed the role of Mephistopheles, with music provided by the Imperial House Music Department orchestra and a chorus from the Tokyo School of Music, conducted by Franz Eckert. This event is often regarded as marking the beginning of opera performance in Japan.[800]

The Imperial Japanese Legation to the Monarchy was established in Vienna in 1873 and was elevated to the rank of an embassy in 1907. Japan opened its first consulate in Trieste in 1879[801], followed by another in Budapest in 1910. At that time, an honorary consul, Ödön Palotay of Várpalota, was appointed in Budapest, although in August 1900 a Hungarian newspaper suggested that the person initially selected for this position may have been the lawyer Soma Perl (who was a well-known Budapest lawyer at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and a legal assistant and confidant of Károly Eötvös).[802] The Japanese diplomatic mission in Vienna[803] played a significant role during the Russo-Japanese War, as confidential matters between the two empires became increasingly complex. When the war broke out in 1904, it became a global media event, and the European press was filled with articles, both pro-Japanese and pro-Russian. Differences of opinion within each country were shaped by political party affiliation, the current state of the war, and the success or failure of Japanese diplomatic missions in manipulating the European press. European governments' views were divided according to the great power alignments. Thus, Britain, which had a treaty relationship with Japan, was predominantly pro-Japanese; France, which had a treaty relationship with Russia, was pro-Russian; while Germany, which opposed Britain and France and had closer ties to Russia, was critical of Japan.[804] (German Emperor Wilhelm II was a leading advocate of

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[800] Luciana Galliano: *Manfred Gurlitt and the Japanese Operatic Scene, 1939-1972*. In: Japan Review, 2006:18., p. 223.

[801] Sources suggest that the Trieste consulate was established in 1879, when Johann Georg Hütterott, an Austrian industrialist, was appointed Honorary Consul of Japan for Austria-Hungary. Sources also note that he was probably the first and the youngest (27 years old at the time) Japanese imperial consul in Europe.

[802] Hazánk, 1900-08-24

[803] The heads of the Viennese embassy (e.g., Tsunetami Sano, Shuzo Aoki, Kinmochi Saionji, Hiromoto Watanabe, Kogoro Takahira, Nobuaki Makino, etc.) later played significant roles in the Meiji government as state bureaucrats, politicians, and diplomats. This demonstrates that Japan regarded the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as an important counterpart, alongside the British, Germans, French, and Russians. (稲野強『牧野伸顕と日露戦争―彼の反黄禍論活動を中心に―(一)』群馬県立女子大学紀要, 8号1988. 3., p. 73.)

[804] 稲野強『日露戦争期における一西洋人の日本観 ― ヴァームベーリ著『黄禍』(一九〇四刊)の翻訳と解説』群馬県立女子大学紀要, 第29号, p. 137.

the “yellow peril” theory, urging Europeans to unite – under German leadership – against what he portrayed as a non-white, non-Christian threat from East Asia, especially China and Japan.) The ‘yellow peril’ theory was a propaganda-driven fear of East Asians, particularly the Chinese and Japanese, that emerged in Europe during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They were collectively referred to as the ‘yellow race’. Japan's successive military successes – the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and the Russo-Japanese War in 1904–1905 – heightened this sense of threat in Europe. Russia leveraged the theory as a propaganda tool during its conflict with Japan in 1904, aiming to garner European support. During the Russo-Japanese War, European newspapers further propagated the theory, often emphasizing that Japan, having modernized and been educated by the West, had become a formidable competitor and a threat to European interests. A recurring theme in these articles was the assertion that Russia's adversary was no longer a ‘small’ country and that a Japanese victory would establish the nation as a dominant force in Asia, posing a challenge to Europe’s interests in the region. In much of Europe – particularly in Austria, France, and Germany – the previously *exotic* image of Japan gave way to a more *fearsome* portrayal as the yellow peril narrative gained traction.[805] The division in public opinions between the countries is further evidenced by a contemporary Cairo newspaper, *Al-Ahram* (الأهرام), which, drawing on European press coverage, reported that the French supported Russia, the British and Germans backed Japan, and the Austrians were divided.[806] A French historian, René Pinon, also commented on this in 1906: Americans, Britons, Belgians, and Swiss generally supported Japan, as did Poles, Hungarians, and Jews who opposed Russia. In contrast, Russia was backed by the French, Slavs, and Irish nationalists. Pinon criticized the international socialist movement for undermining European unity by siding with non-European Japan.[807] We can gain an inside view of the atmosphere in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy when the war broke out from the reminiscences of Henry Wickham Steed, a British journalist and foreign correspondent for *The Times*, who was a leading expert on Central Europe through his reporting from Vienna and Budapest.

> *“The news came while I was at Budapest, where feeling ran strongly in favour of Japan. Magyar hatred of Russia, whose intervention against Kossuth[808] and*

[805] 稲野強『牧野伸顕と日露戦争（二）―オーストリアの新聞から見た戦争世論』群馬県立女子大学紀要, 10号1990. 3., pp. 44-45.
[806] 1904 فبراير 17 ،الأهرام ،مذاهب الناس في الحرب. Madhāhib al-nās fī al-ḥarb, Al-Ahrām, 17 Fibrāyir 1904.
[807] René Pinon: *La lutte pour le Pacifique: Origines et résultats de la guerre russo-japonaise.* Paris, 1906., pp. 187-232.
[808] Lajos Kossuth: a Hungarian nobleman, lawyer, journalist, politician, statesman and governor-president of the Kingdom of Hungary during the revolution of 1848–1849

Görgei[809] *in 1849 had destroyed Hungarian hopes of independence, and the influence of the Hungarian press, almost entirely Jewish – and therefore Russophobe – combined to create a public opinion overwhelmingly pro-Japanese. On the other hand, the Slav races of Hungary and of Austria (except the Poles) were naturally pro-Russian. Austrian-German opinion was divided. The German-Jewish press gave vent to its hatred of Russia, while the anti-Semitic and pan-German organs denounced the Japanese. The bearing of the Emperor was neutral, though the feeling of the Court and of the Austrian aristocracy was anti-Japanese. In these circumstances, the Japanese Minister at Vienna, Baron Makino, found himself in a position of some difficulty. His tactful behaviour won him, however, the personal regard of his diplomatic colleagues and even of the Court, whereas the Russian Ambassador, Count Kapnist, lost ground by his open assumption that a speedy Russian victory was a matter of course."*[810]

The Russo-Japanese War was reported from countless angles, but in November 1904 Adolf Polányi/Pollacsek, a Hungarian war correspondent writing for *Pesti Napló*, chose a particularly unusual one:

"*I would like to bring here all those from around the world who are enthusiastic about war, so they can see these shipments of the wounded, these bloody, mutilated human wrecks: some have lost a hand, some a leg – strong, capable men slaughtered. A friend of mine, an editor at a Yokohama newspaper, hearing that I was traveling there, asked me if I would write him a report on a large assembly to be held in Tokyo. With a thousand joys, of course. Presenting my press credentials, I was received very courteously at the door of some enormous hall. I entered. Before me was the most dazzling sight I can remember! A brilliant, dazzlingly shining crowd: over a thousand priests, dressed in more than a hundred different kinds and colors of clerical garments! They sat side by side in patient friendship: the elegant Jesuit father in black soutane with a white collar, the Buddhist priest in white robes, Roman Catholic prelates in violet pluvials, Jewish officiants in yellow robes, Franciscan monks in brown, and priests of various sects in their wildly colorful attire. Here and there in the crowd, a Protestant pastor in puritan garb, sober and bourgeois in appearance, broke the exotic, splendid pattern. They were all there:*

[809] Artúr Görgey: a Hungarian military leader renowned for being one of the greatest generals of the Hungarian Revolutionary Army

[810] Henry Wickham Steed: *Through Thirty Years 1892-1922 - A Personal Narrative*. Vol. 1. 1924, Doubleday, Page & Co. New York., p. 214.

Methodists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Nonconformists, lay brothers, Buddhist monks, Shinto priests, the grand rabbi of Nagasaki, the Russian bishop in Tokyo, chaplains, officiating priests – every branch of human weakness in its own misguided path represented by a colorful flower in this miraculous bouquet. What were they doing? Well, naturally, all together, each according to the obligatory command of their own religious principles: the Jews, because their law said, "Thou shalt not kill"; the Christian priests, because the God-man said, who redeemed mankind's sins with his blood: do not do to others what you would not want done to yourself; the Buddhists, because according to their religious principle, it is not only a deadly sin to kill a human, but even the senseless animal is under moral protection. Each, I must say, referring to these high and wondrous ideals, unanimously and with shared enthusiasm adopted the following resolution proposal: "The Russo-Japanese War was not declared merely in the interest of the Japanese Empire and with a view to peace in the East, but also in the interest of world civilization and eternal justice. It has nothing to do with denominational or racial differences. Therefore, we, the ecclesiastical men gathered here today, regardless of denominational and racial differences, each invoking our religious conviction, have sought to demonstrate the true meaning of this war..." It was an interesting and instructive morning. What so many noble tasks in the West could not achieve – the ending of much sectarian strife – was accomplished in the Far East by the clergy's attitude toward war. In any case, it is astonishing in its naivety that the Japanese workers' paper 'Heiminoha'[811] *remarked: "We want to know whether Christ and Buddha, if they were resurrected, would approve of this system of killings. We want to know whether it is God's will to see His children die in a hail of bullets and a flood of blood." A naive question, isn't it?*"[812]

As for the Viennese newspapers, they extensively covered the rising tensions and the outbreak of hostilities between Russia and Japan, providing front-page commentaries that reflected their respective perspectives. Although many newspapers generally leaned toward Russia – especially conservative and politically Catholic ones, often driven by overtly racist motives – exceptions included *Die Zeit*, which strongly supported Japan, and

[811] Probably a misrendered version of 'Heimin Shinbun' 平民新聞
[812] Pesti Napló, 1904 nov. 18. Translated by the Author

the Social Democrats' *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, which was fiercely anti-Russian.[813] A valuable contemporary insight into Austo-Hungarian public opinion on the war comes from February 1904, when the Viennese newspaper *Illustrirtes Wiener Extrablatt* conducted a five-week survey on the Russo-Japanese War. The *Illustrirtes Wiener Extrablatt* aimed to reflect public opinion and actively invited readers' voices, avoiding taking sides during the Russo-Japanese War. Rather than offering strictly impartial reporting, it presented arguments for both sides and let readers decide. On 28 February 1904, the newspaper launched a month-long survey, providing cut-out ballots for Russia and Japan, which readers could return with optional comments. The results, published on 3 April 1904, showed 12,543 responses: 48% favored Japan, 46% favored Russia, and 717 were neutral, citing pacifism or indifference. Pro-Japanese responses emphasized a desire for social and political change, criticizing the status quo in Austria-Hungary, Russia, and the world. Arguments highlighting "civilization" and "freedom" often cast Japan as a force for progress, and opposition to autocracy mainly targeted Russia. Sympathy for Japan was tied to admiration for the underdog overcoming adversity. Pro-Russian comments, by contrast, stressed maintaining the status quo, praised Russia's historical support of the Habsburg monarchy (1848–49), and emphasized pan-Slavism, contrasting with anti-Slavic sentiment in pro-Japanese responses. Enthusiastic expressions, like poems, appeared on both sides but were more common among pro-Japanese readers. Socialist and Social Democratic views appeared only in pro-Japanese comments, often paired with calls for freedom and justice. Anti-Semitism divided the two camps: some pro-Russian responses included anti-Semitic remarks, while many pro-Japanese responses explicitly condemned Russian anti-Semitism. Even superficial engagement with Japanese culture or art could foster sympathy for Japan, showing the diverse bases of support reflected in the survey.[814] Understandably, Japan attracted significant attention in various parts of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Beginning in February 1904, the Krakow daily *Czas* regularly reported on the conflict, initially skeptical that a small nation could defeat Tsarist Russia. Japanese victories soon shifted attitudes, earning admiration and prompting Polish leaders to engage with Japan to advance Polish interests in Europe. Józef Piłsudski and Roman Dmowski independently traveled to Tokyo, with Dmowski later publishing articles portraying Japan as a moral exemplar for Poles. In his earlier work *Myśli nowoczesnego Polaka*, he

[813] Ulrich Brandenburg: *Transnational Solidarities and Competing Visions of Europe: Vienna's Vote on the Russo-Japanese War*. In: History - The Journal of the Historical Association. 2022. p. 894.; 896.
[814] Ulrich Brandenburg: *Transnational Solidarities and Competing Visions of Europe: Vienna's Vote on the Russo-Japanese War.* In: History - The Journal of the Historical Association. 2022. pp. 897-898.; 904-906.

warned against European passivity, framing a “civilizational threat” from the East – not Japan, but China – as a potential “yellow peril”.[815] Popular satirical weeklies in Vienna – *Kikeriki*, *Der Floh*, and *Figaro* – shaped Austro-Hungarian opinions on Japan through caricatures, editorials, and commentaries that daily newspapers could not openly publish. In Budapest, *Vasárnapi Újság* ran a political caricature just days after the attack on Port Arthur, while other Hungarian magazines like *Bolond Istók*, *Borsszem Jankó*, and *Kakas Márton* regularly published Japan-related satirical content throughout the war.[816]

A thorough analysis of Hungarian articles, commentaries, and books[817] on the Russo-Japanese War shows that the narratives often framed military events through the lens of national character. Hungarian accounts sharply contrasted the Japanese and Russians, attributing distinct collective traits to each. Hungarian sympathy for Japan was shaped by historical memory of the 1849 Russian intervention, which had crushed Hungary’s War of Independence. The Japanese were portrayed as a disciplined, patriotic, and militarily skilled nation with strong traditions in warfare, high respect for soldiers, and an exceptional aptitude for learning – even surpassing Europeans in some areas. These qualities explained Japan’s military successes and elicited admiration from Hungarian readers, though some assessments reflected colonialist assumptions, depicting Japan as a “pagan” or “unexpectedly capable” people. Russians, by contrast, were acknowledged for qualities like toughness, courage, and perseverance, but negative traits dominated the narrative: they were depicted as misled, oppressed under Nicholas II’s autocracy, and dragged into war like serfs. Hungarian commentators emphasized that Russian soldiers’ intellectual and military abilities fell short compared to the Japanese, reinforcing the contrast. Some Hungarian interpretations also framed the war in moral and political terms, viewing Japan as a civilized, justified actor confronting an autocratic and mismanaged Russia. Overall, the discourse combined admiration for Japan’s military and societal qualities with a critique of Russia, blending historical memory, perceived national character, and elements of contemporary European attitudes toward race and civilization.[818]

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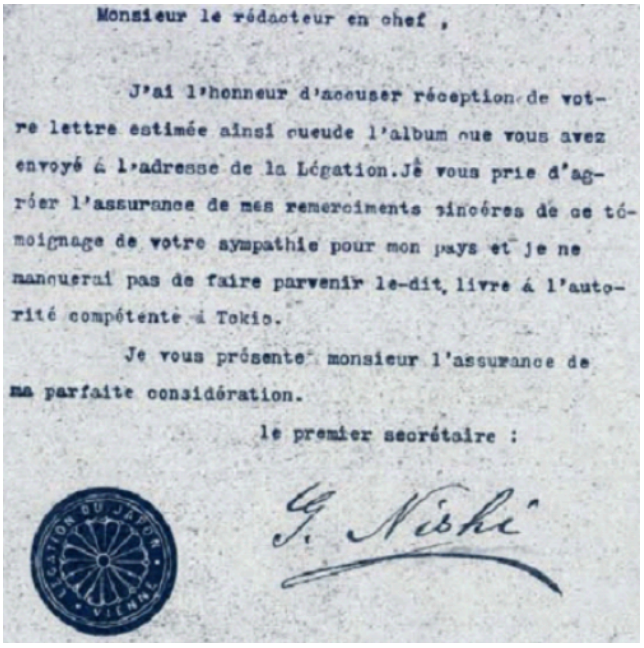
[815] Mirjam Dénes, Györgyi Fajcsák, Piotr Spławski, Toshio Watanabe: *Japonisme in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy*. Museum of Fine Arts–Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, 2020. p. 265.
[816] Mirjam Dénes, Györgyi Fajcsák, Piotr Spławski, Toshio Watanabe: *Japonisme in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy*. Museum of Fine Arts–Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, 2020. p. 267.
[817] Olysói Gabányi János: *Az orosz–japán háború 1904–05*. Kassa, 1909.; Baráthosi-Balogh Benedek: *Dai Nippon. Kelet csodái.* Budapest, 1906.; Képviselőházi Napló 1901., 1904. május 21., 1904. augusztus 10.; Tolnai Világ-Lap, 1905. január 1.; Protestáns Szemle 1904.; Az Ujság, 1904. május 12.; Székelység, 1905. január 17.
[818] Szabó-Zsoldos Gábor: *"Csodás bur harcosok" és "Éljen Japán!" - A búr háború és az orosz-japán háború a kortárs magyar közvéleményben: mítoszok és nemzetkarakterológia.* In: Demeter Gábor – Schrek Katalin (szek.): Az eszmetörténettől a nemzetközi kapcsolatokig. Budapest, 2023. pp. 200., 202-205.

Hungarian public opinion framed the Russo-Japanese War in terms of Hungarian history, culture, and identity, using it to reinforce political goals and national self-understanding. Sympathy for Japan was linked to shared traits such as love of freedom and patriotism, and occasionally to theories of Japanese-Hungarian kinship. Parallels were drawn between historical developments: the Ausgleich of 1867 in Hungary and the Meiji Restoration in Japan, with Japan presented as a model for teachability, respect for tradition, patriotism, and military organization. Hungarian interpretations were strongly shaped by the memory of the 1848–1849 War of Independence, portraying Japan as a "freedom fighter" struggling against a great empire. Admired Japanese qualities included self-sacrifice, courage, determination, and national patriotism, alongside effective military education and mobilization. Support for Japan reflected Russophobia, rooted in the memory of Russia's suppression of Hungary in 1849 and the perception that Japan's victory weakened a traditional Eastern threat. Japanese military successes were thus seen as a model for Hungarian armed forces and a source of lessons for national development.[819] According to Gábor Szabó-Zsoldos, the characteristic elements of pro-Japanese narratives found in other European countries are also visible in Hungary's 'small nation' sympathies toward the Russo-Japanese War. One key element is the idea of a 'just war'. In this view, Japan – a 'small' nation – was forced to take up arms against the great Russian Empire, placing moral superiority on the side of the Japanese. Related to this is the motif that "they are fighting our war", portraying Japan as carrying the banner of civilization in the conflict. Hungarian interpretations added a unique layer by framing the Russo-Japanese War within the context of Hungary's own experiences in 1848–1849.[820] In addition to these, the war also produced heroes in the eyes of the Hungarian public. General Kuroki became celebrated as "*the hero of the victorious battle by the Yalu River*". Great attention was given to Nogi, "*the heroic Japanese commander who captured Port Arthur*", though Hungarian newspapers also spoke appreciatively of his Russian opponent, General Stoessel. Regarding Togo, the Japanese commander who defeated the Russian fleet at the Battle of Tsushima, Károly Eötvös described him in a telegram to the Japanese Emperor as "*the hero of every free nation*".[821] News of General Nogi's letter to Dr. Lajos

[819] Szabó-Zsoldos Gábor: *"Csodás bur harcosok" és "Éljen Japán!" - A búr háború és az orosz-japán háború a kortárs magyar közvéleményben: mítoszok és nemzetkarakterológia.* In: Demeter Gábor – Schrek Katalin (szek.): Az eszmetörténettől a nemzetközi kapcsolatokig. Budapest, 2023. pp. 207-209.
[820] Szabó-Zsoldos Gábor: *"Csodás bur harcosok" és "Éljen Japán!" - A búr háború és az orosz-japán háború a kortárs magyar közvéleményben: mítoszok és nemzetkarakterológia.* In: Demeter Gábor – Schrek Katalin (szek.): Az eszmetörténettől a nemzetközi kapcsolatokig. Budapest, 2023. p. 209.
[821] Szabó-Zsoldos Gábor: *"Csodás bur harcosok" és "Éljen Japán!" - A búr háború és az orosz-japán háború a kortárs magyar közvéleményben: mítoszok és nemzetkarakterológia.* In: Demeter Gábor – Schrek Katalin (szek.): Az

Ágner, a secondary school teacher, was also circulated in segments of the Hungarian national press.[822] A Hungarian satirical magazine reflected enthusiasm for the Japanese: in a piece titled *A jó Nogi (The Good Nogi)*, published in *Az Üstökös*, the Japanese general is portrayed as extremely happy – not because the Russians had retreated, but because a Hungarian delegation was about to visit him on behalf of "*the sweet little Hungarian people*".[823] Another noteworthy message addressed to the Japanese was sent at the end of the Russo-Japanese War, when the editorial staff of *Tolnai Világlapja* collected all the issues in which the war had been covered and sent them to the Japanese Emperor, thereby expressing their sympathy for Japan. The issues were bound into a decorative album with a cover encrusted with precious stones and sent to the Japanese Embassy in Vienna together with a cover letter in French. The embassy's first secretary, Genshiro Nishi, replied; his letter of thanks, written in French and dated October 3, 1905, was also published (see below).[824]



Monsieur le rédacteur en chef ,

J'ai l'honneur d'accuser réception de votre lettre estimée ainsi queude l'album que vous avez envoyé á l'adresse de la Légation. Je vous prie d'agréer l'assurance de mes remerciments sincéres de ce témoignage de votre sympathie pour mon pays et je ne manquerai pas de faire parvenir le-dit livre á l'autorité compétente á Tokio.

Je vous présente monsieur l'assurance de ma parfaite considération.

le premier secrétaire :

G. Nishi

The preceding discussion of the European press, and particularly of the situation in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy during the Russo-Japanese War, is essential for understanding how Japanese diplomatic efforts entered the picture. Unsurprisingly, both

eszmetörténettől a nemzetközi kapcsolatokig. Budapest, 2023. pp. 205-206.

[822] *Az udvarias Nogi tábornok*. Pesti Hírlap, 1905. július 14. p. 8.; *Nogi tábornok arcképe*. Budapesti Hírlap, 1905. július 14. p. 9.; *Nogi tábornok egy magyar tanárhoz*. Magyar Nemzet, 1905. július 20. p. 7.; *Nogi tábornok levelező lapja egy magyar tanárhoz*. Vasárnapi Ujság, 1905. július 30. p. 494.

[823] *A jó Nogi*. Az Üstökös, 1905. augusztus 20. p. 9.

[824] Tolnai Világlapja, 1905.10.22.

Russia and Japan devoted significant resources to shaping press coverage and influencing international public opinion. The Japanese government, naturally sensitive to the rise of the yellow peril theory, acted swiftly – engaging in counter-propaganda within the European press. They approached journalists from foreign newspapers to write articles against the yellow peril narrative. A great deal of money was spent on this effort: all the Japanese legations (55 in total) and their heads at the time were involved in manipulating foreign newspapers. However, the activities of the legations in Austria-Hungary (Nobuaki Makino), France, Germany, and the U.S. were particularly notable. At the German legation, the central Japanese propaganda against the yellow peril was led by Alexander von Siebold, while in America, it was spearheaded by Envoy Kogoro Takahira.[825] Japan's coordinated press and information strategy in the Austro-Hungarian Empire during the Russo-Japanese War, carried out under Minister Makino Nobuaki, combined diplomatic reporting, newspaper influence, and pamphlet distribution. A key element was cooperation with the Vienna-based *Politische Correspondenz*, which published diplomatic and financial reports in German and French and was widely cited across Europe. Japan did not fully take over the newspaper, but instead financed selective content arrangements. During Meiji 36–39 (1903–1906), Japan reportedly paid about 3,000 francs annually to the paper in exchange for publishing Japanese-provided material, and this arrangement likely continued until Meiji 43. In 1903, an agreement specified structured distribution of articles, including a total of eight copies: two German versions and five French versions, with additional copies sent to Japanese legations in Berlin, Vienna, Tokyo, Paris, London, Washington, and Saint Petersburg. The scale of funding for press influence in Austria is further detailed through repeated government allocations. The Japanese legation received 1,200 Austrian krones for newspaper-related expenses in several three-month periods: June to August 1904, December 1904 to February 1905, June to August 1905, and September to November 1905. This amounts to at least 7,200 krones over roughly eighteen months. Additional spending included about 3,000 francs annually paid to *Politische Correspondenz* and around 15,000 krones for producing and distributing a German and French pamphlet "*The Yellow Peril*" (which will be discussed later). Sources note that roughly 10,000 copies of related material were printed and distributed across continental Europe, with total production costs estimated at about 200 pounds. Overall, total expenditure on press activities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire is estimated at around 22,200 krones, which is

[825] 松村正義『日露戦争における日本在外公館の「外国新聞操縦」— アジアと大洋州で何をどう広報したのか—』法学研究81巻9号, 2008. 9., p. 44.

approximately 18 million Japanese yen in 2026 terms.[826] In terms of public opinion, there was a clear regional difference within the empire. Austrian newspapers initially condemned Japan's attack on Port Arthur in 1904 as a violation of international law, but gradually shifted toward praising Japan as its military victories accumulated. By contrast, Hungarian newspapers were consistently favorable toward Japan from the beginning of the war, with reports noting strong sympathy in Hungary, which reduced the need for extensive propaganda efforts there compared to other parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The case of Hungarian involvement in producing pro-Japanese books and articles during the Russo-Japanese war was brought to light in Hungary by Tōru Senga in his 1994 papers. The Hungarians involved in these confidential diplomatic relations were Ármin Vámbéry[827] (1832–1913) and Adolf Strausz (1853–1944). Vámbéry was an internationally renowned Turkologist – reputedly the second most recognized Hungarian in Great Britain[828] –, and Strausz was a professor at the *Oriental Academy of Commerce (Keleti Kereskedelmi Akadémia)*, with expertise in Balkan politics and economics. From 1904 onward, the Japanese government relied on them primarily for matters related to the Balkans and Russia. The story began in 1900, when Nobuaki Makino[829], Japan's Envoy Extraordinary in Vienna, proposed to the Japanese Foreign Minister the appointment of an honorary consul in Budapest. Initially, the Foreign Minister did not consider the proposal timely. However, in February 1904 – two weeks after Japan's declaration of war against Russia – he sent a telegram to Makino, stating his intention to "*employ a certain person in Budapest to work for Japan's interests and to follow developments in the Balkan question in particular*".[830] Makino informed the Foreign Minister by telegram that he had made an offer to Adolf Strausz to work for the Japanese government on this matter and "*to provide information on developments in the Balkans that might directly or indirectly affect not only*

[826] 松村正義『日露戦争における日本在外公館の「外国新聞操縦」上の2』In: 帝京国際文化、第11号, 1998., pp. 74-84.; 97.; 103-105.

[827] An orientalist, university professor, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and traveler, he made pioneering contributions to the geography and ethnography of Central Asia and to Turkish philology. As an expert on Asia, he was frequently consulted by both the British and Turkish governments. Beginning in 1865, he served as a private tutor of Oriental languages in Budapest, where he taught until his retirement. He played a key role in founding the Hungarian Geographical Society and was elected an honorary member of several European scientific societies.

[828] Vámbéry successfully transformed his peripheral status as a Hungarian scholar into a well-known, internationally marketable persona – an Anglophile and Russophobe expert on Central Asia and the Ottoman Empire. David Mandler: *Making Arminius Vámbéry: British Receptions in 1864–1865*. Orpheus Noster VOL. 16., No. 4. 2024. pp. 34-43. Vámbéry was even impersonated by an American who gave public talks in his name and tried to imitate him in every conceivable way. His modus operandi was to exploit Vámbéry's popularity, but he typically ran off with the pre-payments for his lectures.

[829] Makino was posted to the Japanese legation in Vienna in 1899. Since the 1900s, the Monarchy provided Japan with an ideal platform for monitoring the situation in the Balkans and Russia, which also enhanced Makino's role in his post. See: 稲野強『牧野伸顕と日露戦争―彼の反黄禍論活動を中心に―(一)』群馬県立女子大学紀要,8号1988. 3., pp. 73-77.

[830] Senga Toru: *Vámbéry Ármin a japán diplomácia szolgálatában az orosz-japán háború idején*. Századok, 128., 1994., p. 725.

European diplomacy in general but also Russia".[831] In his later memoirs, Nobuaki Makino emphasized the importance of intelligence activities concerning the Balkan question, stating:

> "*The Balkan question had quite an impact on Japanese-Russian relations at that time, and so during my service, I naturally did not fail to pay attention to this issue. (...) If problems arose in the Balkans, Russia would assume a major role as patron of the Slavic peoples, and this was highly desirable from Japan's perspective at the time. Therefore, it was crucial to strive for accurate information about the Balkans*...".[832]

Strausz accepted the offer on the condition of a monthly salary of 200 Austrian krones, coverage of travel expenses, and the option for either party to terminate the contract at any time. He began working for the Japanese government in March, and from that date, Makino regularly forwarded his reports to the Japanese Foreign Ministry for several years. Vámbéry's involvement became prominent when, in April 1904, Makino proposed to the Japanese Foreign Minister that Vámbéry undertake propaganda efforts to counter the spread of the yellow peril theory in the public opinion and press of European countries unsympathetic to Japan.[833] With this initiative, the story of the creation of the German and French pamphlet titled "*The Yellow Peril*" began. Vámbéry was specifically tasked with countering this idea, as noted in Secret Report No. 36, dated 19 May, written by Nobuaki Makino to the Japanese Foreign Minister. The report mentions that Vámbéry was:

> " (...) *highly knowledgeable and famous for being very well informed about the situation in Central Asia. It is said that the British government sometimes listens to the professor's views on events in Afghanistan and Pakistan (...). I understand that he has great sympathy for the Empire in the present Russo-Japanese War, and when I was on an official trip to Budapest, I met him and (...) asked him to help us dispel the evil theory of yellow-race condemnation, which is most prevalent in Central Europe. The professor readily agreed (...) He (...) thought that the public should be made aware of the need not to get lost in the jungle of lies and unfounded rumours, which are so skilfully scattered, and, if possible, not to fall into their trap; and that, although great efforts have been made against the theory in newspapers*

[831] Senga Toru: *Vámbéry Ármin a japán diplomácia szolgálatában az orosz-japán háború idején*. Századok, 128., 1994., p. 725.
[832] Makino Nobuaki: *Kaikoroku.* I. p. 300. Cited by: Senga Toru: *Strausz Adolf japán kapcsolatához az I. világháború előtt*. Századok, 1999. 133., p. 1017. Translated by the Author.
[833] Senga Toru: *Vámbéry Ármin a japán diplomácia szolgálatában az orosz-japán háború idején*. Századok, 128., 1994., p. 726.

and periodicals, there are still very large areas, such as Germany, France, and Austria, where the evil theory is reviving. Therefore, the utmost care must be taken to prevent its revival, and every embassy of the Japanese Empire should endeavour to achieve this end (...) It is well known that Professor Vámbéry is anti-Russian. In any case, he is a well-known scientist throughout Europe, and it is an undisputed fact that he plays an important role in a certain field, so it is natural that many people listen to his opinion. Nevertheless, I think he will be of great use if we ask for his help in presenting the civilisation of the empire. I have mentioned to him that, at our request, he may publish occasionally in newspapers and periodicals."[834]

Over time, the original request evolved into a commission for a dedicated book on the subject, which was published in German by Vámbéry in 1904, in three thousand copies, under the title "*Die gelbe Gefahr – Eine Kultur Studie"*. Vámbéry received a £100 honorarium from the Japanese Foreign Ministry for writing the book, though in a telegram to Makino he wrote that he was not motivated by money:

"*...I have made my name public for the politics of a country, and I am not one who has worked merely for material goods. This is because of my strong motivation, so I would be very happy if His Excellency could inform the honourable government that I have written the book of my own free will. Since I have already pledged my support to the honourable country, I commit to continuing to serve its good and defence*".[835]

As promised, Vámbéry wrote several times on the subject of the yellow peril, for example, in *Revue d'Orient et de Hongrie*, edited by Adolf Strausz. In August and September 1904, he published a four-part series of articles entitled *Le péril jaune*. In 1906, the Japanese government awarded Vámbéry the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Second Class, in recognition of his merits. Adolf Strausz was also awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Fifth Class, in 1908, for his work in obtaining information on the Russian situation during the Russo-Japanese War.[836] Vámbéry's booklet "*The Yellow Peril"*, whose simple title could have been misleading, argued not for but *against* the theory – or at least that was its intended purpose. It is a strange twist of fate that a text which praised Japan in every

[834] Senga Toru: *Vámbéry Ármin a japán diplomácia szolgálatában az orosz-japán háború idején*. Századok, 128., 1994., pp. 727-728. Translated by the Author.
[835] Senga Toru: *Vámbéry Ármin a japán diplomácia szolgálatában az orosz-japán háború idején*. Századok, 128., 1994., p. 729. Translated by the Author.
[836] 『明治期外国人叙勲史料集成』第四巻、思文閣出版、1991., p. 296., 419.

respect could later be read as supporting the very idea of the yellow peril, particularly in its discussion of Japan's technological progress.[837]

Japanese honors awarded to Hungarians

Vámbéry and Strausz were not the only Hungarians to catch the attention of the Japanese state. Their decorations were part of a larger, and surprisingly little-known, tradition: between 1868 and 1912, around fifty Hungarians received Japanese honours.[838] These awards reflect the areas of importance to Japan, worthy of official, diplomatic recognition. Of the nearly fifty awards, most were given to diplomats, politicians, and heads of institutions on the occasion of various protocol events, such as the visits of Japanese delegations to Hungary, the visits of Japanese delegations to Vienna, the reception of diplomatic delegations from the Monarchy, the visit of Franz Ferdinand to Japan, etc. In 1891, Vasárnapi Újság noted with a touch of mockery that "*in the stock exchange of European order hunters, the Imperial Japanese Order of the Rising Sun and the Order of Chrysanthemum are ahead of the Turkish Medjid, the Serbian Takova, and the Persian Order of the Sun and the Lion in terms of moral value*".[839] Many Hungarians were honored for their professional support and the warm welcome they extended to Japanese travellers on study tours in Europe. Among the most noteworthy awards were those recognizing contributions in horse breeding, forestry, and silkworm cultivation. Fourteen medals were awarded to Hungarian officials of various ranks for their assistance with horse purchases, and three were presented to agricultural politicians for hosting Japanese forestry surveyors and contributing to their research. Of particular significance was the role of János Bolle, chairman of the Imperial and Royal Experimental Station for Agriculture and Chemistry in Gorizia, in the development of silkworm breeding in Japan. Bolle was the only specialist to

[837] 稲野強『日露戦争期における一西洋人の日本観―ヴァームベーリ著『黄禍』(一九〇四刊)の翻訳と解説』群馬県立女子大学紀要, 第29号, pp. 152-153.

[838] In Japan, the Western-style honors system was introduced in 1875. During the Meiji period, the major orders included the Order of the Chrysanthemum, the Order of the Rising Sun, the Order of the Sacred Treasure, and the Order of the Precious Crown. Additionally, there was a military decoration, the Order of the Golden Kite, which existed between 1890 and 1947. These medals played a significant role in Japan's foreign relations; the first foreigners (an American and a Frenchman) were decorated in 1876, and from that point onwards, Japanese state medals were awarded to foreigners in large numbers. (Between 1868 and the 1894 Sino-Japanese War, the emperor was among the Japanese most frequently in contact with foreigners, regularly receiving foreign dignitaries – often on a weekly basis, except during his major domestic tours.) Franz Joseph I was entitled to receive the Order of the Chrysanthemum with chain and shoulder ribbon from 1 January 1898. The Order of the Chrysanthemum was held by only five individuals in the Austro-Hungarian Empire: Emperor and King Franz Joseph I, Archduke Rudolf Franz Charles Joseph, Archduke Leopold Ferdinand, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and Archduke Charles Louis.

[839] Szemere Attila: *A mikádó*. In.: Vasárnapi Újság, XXXVIII. Évf., 23. szám, 1891. jún. 7., p. 367.

be honored twice,[840] receiving the Order of the Sacred Treasure, III Class, a relatively high distinction. In the field of forestry, several individuals received prestigious awards for their professional achievements. Gyula Sóltz, Ministerial Counsellor and National Chief Forester, was awarded the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Second Class. János Földi, Royal Hungarian Forestry Advisor, received the Order of the Rising Sun, Fourth Class, while Károly Schmidt, Royal Hungarian Forestry Officer, was honored with the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Fourth Class, in 1902.[841] The Numismatic Collection of the Military History Museum in Budapest still houses Japanese medals from this era. Among them is the Order of the Rising Sun, Class V, awarded to artilleryman Captain János Erlich in 1910. Erlich received this distinction for his presentation of the military institutions of the Monarchy during artilleryman Captain Tadayoshi Koide's stay in Vienna between December 1908 and October 1909. The museum holds another medal from this period: the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Class IV, awarded to Károly Follért, Deputy State Secretary and General Director of the Royal Hungarian Post and Telegraph Company, in 1897. He received this honor for his cooperation with and assistance to the Japanese delegation at the 1896 International Telegraph Conference in Budapest.[842] Follért's award document, consisting of a certificate and a handwritten cover letter in French, has been preserved in the Archives of the Budapest Postal Museum.

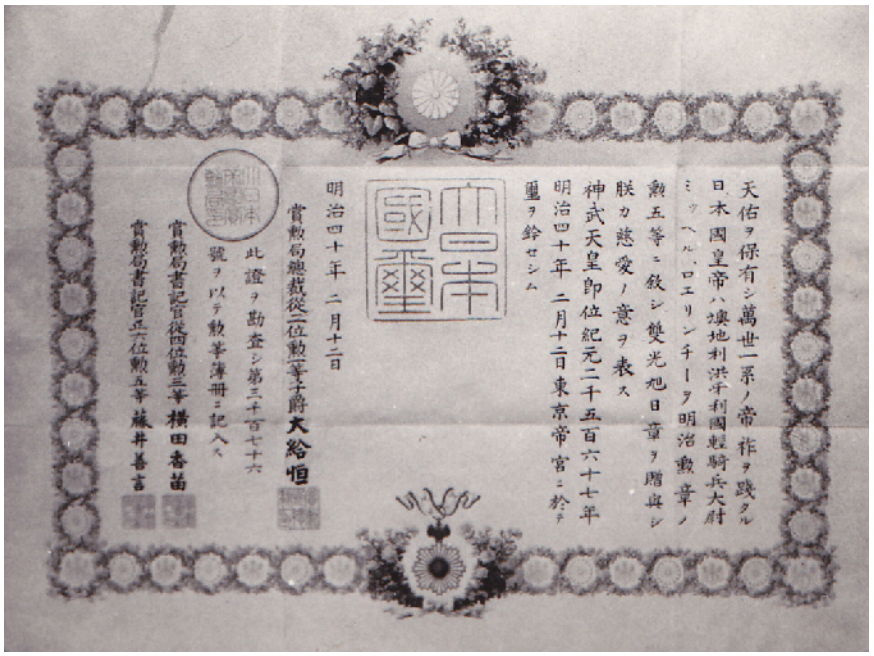
Class V of the Order of the Rising Sun, lacquer box of the medal of János Ehrlich

[840] 『明治期外国人叙勲史料集成』別巻、思文閣出版、1991. pp. 40-55.
[841] Erdészeti Lapok, 41. évf., 12. füzet, 1902., p. 1423.
[842] Sallay Gergely Pál: *Japán Kitüntetések a Hadtörténeti Múzeumban*. In: Acta Musei Militaris In Hungaria – A Hadtörténeti Múzeum Értesítője, 11. sz. 2010. pp. 310-311.; 314-315.

Award of the Class IV of the Order of the Sacred Treasure to Károly Follért

Class IV of the Order of the Sacred Treasure, medal of Károly Follért in original lacquer box

In the private collection of Csilla Lőrinczy (whose great-great-grandfather was Mihály Lőrinczy) one additional order is preserved. In 1907, Colonel Mihály Lőrinczy (?-?) and Prince Leopold Clement Philipp August Maria of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (1878–1916) were bestowed with Japanese orders. Lőrinczy received the Order of the Rising Sun, 5th Class, while Prince Leopold of Coburg was granted the Order of the Chrysanthemum.



Certificate of the Order of the Rising Sun, Class V, for Mihály Lőrinczy (private collection)

Less is known about the (Austrian-) Hungarian medals awarded to Japanese recipients. Members of the Japanese imperial family were honored with the Grand Cross of the Royal Order of St. Stephen of Hungary, one of the Habsburg Empire's most prestigious decorations, established by Maria Theresa in 1764. Initially awarded to a select few foreigners, the Grand Cross became more commonly bestowed on foreign dignitaries from the 19th century onward, primarily for protocol reasons.[843] In 1907, the Hungarian Council of Ministers also nominated several Japanese agriculturalists for Hungarian honors in recognition of their annual purchases of horses from Hungary.

Year	Number of Membership in the Order of Saint Stephen	Names of the Japanese owners of the St Stephen's Grand Cross	Honorific title
1881	1211.	Mutsuhito	His Majesty the Emperor of Japan
1893	1350.	Taruhito Arisugawanomiya	Imperial Highness, Imperial Prince of Japan
1900	?	Yoshihito Harunomiya (Emperor Taisho)	His Majesty the Emperor of Japan
1900	?	Kotohito Kan'in	Imperial Highness, Imperial Prince of Japan
1909	?	Kuniyoshi Kuni	Imperial Highness, Imperial Prince of Japan
1909	1589.	Morimasa Nashimotonomiya	Imperial Highness, Imperial Prince of Japan
1910	1605.	Hiroyasu Fushiminomiya	Imperial Highness, Imperial Prince of Japan

Grand Cross of the Order of Saint Stephen (early 20th c.)

[843] http://tornai.com/rendtagok.htm (accessed: 2009 July; no longer available); *Szent István lovagjai – A legrangosabb magyar kitüntetés 250 éve*. Exhibition in the Hungarian National Museum, May-Aug 2014.

To put the above in a global perspective, below is John Breen's summary of the medals that the Meiji Emperor gave or received between 1874 and 1893. The subtle aim behind bestowing Japanese honors on foreign dignitaries was to assert parity with Western rulers, with the emperor serving as a key instrument of what John Breen calls 'ornamental diplomacy'. In the 19th century, exchanging (or withholding) symbolic gifts helped forge personal ties between monarchs and shape diplomatic relations – ultimately serving as a way to affirm mutual sovereignty, or what was often seen as royal 'cousinhood'. Japan's modern honors system entered the international stage in 1879, serving not just as a mark of distinction but as a gesture of friendship between monarchs. Between the Meiji Restoration and the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, Emperor Meiji actively engaged in ornamental diplomacy by exchanging honors with numerous foreign sovereigns. As the table below shows, he received prestigious decorations from the rulers of Austria-Hungary, Germany, Russia, Italy, Hawaii, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain, Montenegro, Siam, Turkey, and Greece – followed by the French president. In return, he conferred Japan's highest honor, the Supreme Order of the Chrysanthemum, upon each of these heads of state. John Breen aptly highlights the significance of those absent from this diplomatic exchange: the Chinese and Korean monarchs. Although the Guangxu Emperor of China sent an envoy who formally recognized Meiji as an equal, and although China had established its own chivalric Order of the Double Dragon in 1882, no honors were exchanged. Similarly, despite receiving three Korean delegations, Meiji did not bestow honors on the Korean king. These omissions were deliberate – Japan withheld symbolic recognition of equality and dynastic 'cousinhood'. The reasons remain unstated but were likely debated at the highest levels of government. It was not until 1898 that Meiji began ornamental diplomacy with the Chinese emperor, and only in 1900 did he exchange honors with the Korean Emperor Gwangmu. Japan's relations with Britain offer further nuance. Throughout Queen Victoria's reign (1837–1901), no honors were exchanged between her and Meiji. While the Order of the Garter was traditionally reserved for Christian monarchs, Queen Victoria did at times confer it on non-Christian rulers – such as the Shah of Persia in 1873 – yet she offered Emperor Meiji the lesser Star of India instead, which Japan declined, fearing it would equate the emperor's status with that of a colonial subject. Only after Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) was Emperor Meiji deemed worthy of full British royal recognition. In 1902, King Edward VII accepted the Supreme Order of the Chrysanthemum, and in 1906, he awarded Meiji the Order of the

Garter – marking a belated but symbolically powerful acknowledgment of Japan's new imperial stature.[844] In addition to this, Jacques E. C. Hymans argues that Britain's decision to recognize Japan's sovereignty was heavily influenced by Japan's increased naval shipbuilding budget in the early 1890s, which aligned with Britain's interest in boosting its own naval exports. (France and Germany also signed new treaties based on explicit 'recognition-for-ships' deals.) In 1894, Japan secured a major diplomatic victory by concluding a secret treaty with Britain, in which Britain agreed to phase out extraterritorial privileges, dismantle its consular courts, and accept Japanese legal jurisdiction after a five-year transition, during which Japan would adopt a Western-style civil code. In return, British citizens gained expanded commercial and travel rights within Japan. The treaty introduced a detailed, fixed 12-year tariff schedule, though changes could be made by mutual consent. Jacques E. C. Hymans views this treaty as the formal British recognition of Japan's sovereignty.[845]

In addition to John Breen, Yoshinori Osakabe also compiled a list of Chrysanthemum Medals awarded to foreign heads of state and royalty from the establishment of the order in 1877 until 1888. If we summarize the data Osakabe collected from official sources and organize it into a five-tier ranking based on the number of medals awarded by the Meiji state, it becomes clear that Germany and/or Prussia tops the list with six medals. Russia follows on the second tier with five medals. On the third tier, we find Austria-Hungary and Sweden-Norway, each with three medals. Tier four includes Denmark with two medals, while tier five comprises Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Hawaii, Turkey, France, Portugal, Montenegro, Britain, Siam, and various German federal states, each receiving one medal.[846] Austria-Hungary's placement in the third tier of Chrysanthemum Medal recipients indicates a respectable, but secondary diplomatic status in Meiji Japan up to 1888. Between 1888 and 1912, the tier list was headed by Russia with nine medals. On the second tier was Germany and/or Prussia with six medals. Tier three was occupied by Britain with five medals. In tier four, we find Italy and France with four medals each. Tier five included Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Korea, and Bavaria, each with three medals. Tier six contained China and Portugal, with two medals each. On the final tier were several German federal states, along with Greece, Mexico, Spain, Denmark, Siam, and the

[844] John Breen: *Ornamental Diplomacy.* In: Robert Hellyer and Harald Fuess (eds.): The Meiji Restoration Japan as a Global Nation. 2020. Cambridge University Press, pp. 234-235.; 243-246.
[845] Jacques E. C. Hymans: *Why Recognize? Explaining Victorian Britain's Decision to Recognize the Sovereignty of Imperial Japan.* In: Korean Journal of International Studies 2014, vol.12, Special Issue p. 50.; 57.; 71. DOI: 10.14731/kjis.2014.05.12.S.49
[846] 刑部芳則『明治時代の勲章外交儀礼』明治聖徳記念学会紀要, 平成29年 pp. 143-144.

Netherlands, each receiving one medal.[847] Austria-Hungary's relative decline in the medal ranking after 1888 suggests that while its diplomatic ties with Japan remained stable, they did not deepen, and its importance diminished as Japan increasingly prioritized relations with more influential global powers.

Date	Order of the Chrysanthemum (after 1888: Grand Cordon of the Order of the Chrysanthemum) bestowed by the Japanese Emperor	Medals received by the Japanese Emperor	Awarding entity
1874/01/31		Order of Ernest the Pious Grand Cordon Decoration	Ernestine duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha
1879/04/09	German Emperor		
1879/05/29		Order of the Black Eagle	German Emperor
1879/06/10	Grandson of the German Emperor		
1879/09/05		Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle the First-Called	Russian Tsar
1879/09/11	Spanish King		
1879/11/29		The Supreme Order of the Most Holy Annunciation	Italian King
1879/12/08	Italian Royal		
1880/01/29	Crown Prince of Austria		
1880/04/15	Belgian King		
1880/05/07	Emperor/King of Austria-Hungary, King of Italy, the Netherlands, Tsar of Russia; Crown Princes of Russia, Germany		
1880/11/20		Grand Cordon of the Order of Leopold	Belgian King
1881/03/14	King of Hawaii		
1881/05/16		Grand Cross of the Imperial Austrian Order of Leopold	Emperor/King of Austria-Hungary
1881/07/26		Grand Cross of the Order of the Netherlands Lion	King of the Netherlands
1881/07/29	Crown Prince of Sweden-Norway		
1882/03/10	German Royal		
1882/04/20		Order of the Seraphim	Swedish King
1882/09/15	Crown Prince of Russia		
1882/09/22	President of France		
1882/12/27		Grand Cordon of the Order of the White Eagle	German Emperor

[847] 刑部芳則『明治時代の勲章外交儀礼』明治聖徳記念学会紀要, 平成29年 pp. 149-150.

1883/02/12	King of Hawaii		
1883/03/20		Grand Cross of the Légion d'Honneur	President of France
1883/05/02	Portugal King		
1884/01/11	Crown Prince of Montenegro		
1884/01/16	Crown Prince of Germany		
1884/03/04		First Class of the Order of the Golden Fleece	Spanish King
1884/09/03	Crown Prince of Sweden		
1885/02/02		Grand Cross of the Order of the Crown of Prussia	German Emperor
1885/02/18		Order of Prince Danilo I	Royal Family of Montenegro
1885/06/05	German Royal		
1886/12/07	Crown Prince of England		
1887/01/19	Crown Prince of Germany		
1887/02/28	Crown Prince of Germany		
1887/03/28	German Royal		
1887/07/07	Russian Royal		
1887/09/19	King of Siam	Grand Cordon of the Order of the White Elephant	King of Siam
1887/09/29		Order of the Elephant	King of Denmark
1888/01/21		The Most Illustrious Order of the Royal House of Chakri	King of Siam
1888/05/18	Crown Prince of Denmark		
1888/06/26	Sultan of Turkey		
1888/07/11	Emperor/King of Austria-Hungary		
1890/05/08	Crown Prince of England		
1890/06/13		The Order of Imtiyaz	Turkish Sultan
1891/05/13		Grand Cross of the Order of the Redeemer	Greek King
1891/05/18	Crown Prince of Russia, Greece		
1891/12/14	President of Mexico		
1892/12/13	President of France		
1893/08/17	Austrian Royal		

Emperor Meiji and his medals[848]

[848] Based on: ジョン・ブリーン「近代外交体制の創出と天皇」In: 荒野泰典, 石井正敏. 村井章介 (編)『近代化する日本』吉川弘文館, 2012. pp . 130-131.

In addition to the medals, other documents shed light on areas of mutual interest between Japan and (Austro-)Hungary. One example is a contemporary job offer and a related sample contract, which the Japanese Embassy in Vienna sent to the Imperial and Royal Foreign Minister in December 1903. The minister then forwarded the material to the Hungarian Gazette of the National Forestry Association, where it was published. In this publication, the Japanese Imperial Government expressed its wish to establish contact with a professor of forestry who would be willing to take up a chair in the Department of Economics at the University of Tokyo, where forestry is included.[849] The criteria included a degree in forestry and proficiency in German, with a working knowledge of English or French considered an advantage. The contract was valid until December 1906, offering the following remuneration: a travel allowance of 975 yen for both the journey to Japan and the return home, a regular monthly income of 550 yen, and a rent-free, unfurnished house (or, alternatively, a university rent allowance of 40 yen per month).[850] The workload was capped at a maximum of four lessons per day, with Sundays off.

Diplomatic relations between Japan and the Austro-Hungarian Empire were revived and somewhat reinvigorated following the Russo-Japanese War (1905). Japan's rise, its military successes, and its modernization, combined with the Monarchy's previously largely commercial rapprochement, revealed traces of political and financial interests arising from the shifting balance of power in the world. Between 1911 and 1913, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's foreign policy efforts in East Asia included joining the Great Powers' Chinese reorganization loan program[851] and negotiating the revision of the trade treaty with Japan.[852] The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy extended six loans to China totaling £4.75 million. These were tied loans, meaning they were conditional on the use of Austrian industrial suppliers such as Škoda in Bohemia. A major component was a £3.2 million loan in 1913, which also included a Chinese government order for three small cruisers and one large cruiser from the Cantiere Navale shipyard in Monfalcone on the Adriatic coast (then part of Austria-Hungary). This financial engagement formed part of Austria-Hungary's

[849] Erdészeti Lapok, XLIII. évf., 1904. I-XII. füzet, pp. 64-67.
[850] At the exchange rate of 9 December 1903, 1 yen equaled 2 krones 40 pfennigs. Using tools provided by economists, it is possible to calculate an approximate, hypothetical value for this amount today. According to measuringworth.com/japancompare, a teacher's salary of 550 yen in 1903 would be roughly equivalent to 1.4 million yen in today's terms.
[851] 島田昌幸『東京のフランケンシュタイン:あるオーストリア=ハンガリー外交官の東京駐在 (1911-13)』(3.) In: 学習院高等科紀要, 第6号, 2008.7, p. 65.; Recently declassified Japanese telegrams reveal that the Niederösterreichische Escompte-Gesellschaft bank sought to join the loan providers in 1912. Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, ref. code: C08040669600
[852] 島田昌幸『東京のフランケンシュタイン:あるオーストリア=ハンガリー外交官の東京駐在 (1911-13)』(1.) In: 学習院高等科紀要, 第4号, 2006.7., p. 44.

broader entry into international Chinese lending networks, beginning with its desire to participate in the *Six-Nation Reorganization Loan Consortium* (Britain, the United States, France, Germany, Japan, and Russia). Austria-Hungary entered negotiations to join this consortium in March 1912. The Dual Monarchy's participation in the China lending syndicate was driven by both economic and political motives. Joining the consortium would have given Austria-Hungary a role in supervising China's financial restructuring through future "recovery loans", making it a high priority for strengthening Austro-Hungarian–Chinese economic ties. The immediate push came after the Monarchy's heavy industry lost market share in the Balkans, prompting the Heavy Industry Association and major banks to redirect their focus toward China as a new export market. Nevertheless, the Dual Monarchy's entry into the loan consortium ultimately failed. While financial concerns played a role, opposition was primarily political: Britain, France, and Russia – aligned in the Triple Entente – viewed Austria-Hungary as effectively a German proxy and suspected German influence behind its involvement. Germany itself was not strongly supportive and only reluctantly backed Austria-Hungary through their alliance. (The United States, by contrast, supported the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's inclusion to internationalize the consortium. Despite this, the Monarchy's participation was rejected.)[853]

The background to the foreign policy and diplomacy towards Japan was centered on emphasizing the Monarchy's position as a great power. For Japan, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy offered a closer connection to world politics, particularly in terms of monitoring Russia. Masayuki Shimada's argument that the Monarchy's East Asian policy was, in fact, part of its broader policy towards Russia is convincing.[854] This was especially true in 1908 and 1909, when the Austro-Hungarian Empire annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina. During this period, Austro-Hungarian foreign policy interest increasingly focused on Japan. Japan recognized the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina but was concerned about Russia's potential free access to the Bosporus and Dardanelles. The free movement of Russian warships through these straits could have allowed Russia to establish naval bases in the Black Sea, bringing it closer to East Asia and shifting the naval balance in the region.

It was characteristic of the situation that Austria-Hungary and Germany did not consider a potential conflict with Russia impossible. Research by Masayuki Shimada, based on archival sources, revealed that the Austrians had plans to bring Japan into a

[853] 島田昌幸『オーストリア・ハンガリーの「六国借款団」加入問題（一九一二）－その背景・目的と列強諸国の反応－』法学政治学論究　第60号 2004. 3. pp. 358-359.; 380-381..

[854] 島田昌幸『オーストリア=ハンガリー外交における日本の位置付け―ボスニア併合危機期を中心に（1908-1909）』In: 法学政治学論究, 第62号, 2004.9, pp. 202-205.

military alliance alongside the Triple Alliance, which included Germany and Italy.[855] These plans were grounded in a shared view of Russia as a common enemy – facing Japan in East Asia and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the Balkans. The plans did not come to fruition, as Japan had already fought a war against Russia in 1905 and, with Russia not having gained control of the Bosporus, had no particular interest in joining the Monarchy's camp. However, tempers were not dampened: the end of the Balkan conflict coincided with a European tour and a visit to Austria-Hungary by two Japanese princely families in 1909.[856] Rumors of a secret Austro-Japanese military treaty related to the visit emerged in contemporary newspapers, including *Pesti Hírlap*.[857] According to Shimada, the Monarchy's foreign ministry did not deny the rumors about the potential Austro-Hungarian–Japanese treaty, as they could be used to enhance the Dual Monarchy's international prestige as a great power. The Japanese were also aware that the Austro-Hungarians were attempting to use Japan for political purposes, specifically to threaten the Russians.[858] Articles in the British press offer some further insights into the alleged "secret pact".

> "*Referring to the rumour of an alliance between Austria and Japan, the "Zeit" says it has received the following details "from a reliable source": "It is incorrect to say that a Treaty of Alliance between Austria-Hungary and Japan was concluded in 1908, with one paragraph aimed at Russia. But it is correct to say that the idea of such a treaty has been examined in high places(...) It seems that Austria-Hungary and Japan would be ready at a given moment to conclude an important alliance, which would be made with a view to assuring mutual support in case of a war with Russia. (...)" This plain statement is in striking contrast with the recent to of the German press, which unanimously has scoffed at the bare mention of the alliance referred to.*" (Leeds Mercury - Thursday 27 May 1909)

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[855] Between 1867 and 1879, European diplomacy was fluid, with no fixed alliances. In 1873, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia formed the League of the Three Emperors, but it soon broke down due to rivalries. In 1882, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy created the Triple Alliance. To balance this, Germany signed a secret Reinsurance Treaty with Russia in 1887, which lapsed in 1890. Russia then allied with France in 1894. Britain joined France in the Entente Cordiale (1904) and reached an agreement with Russia in 1907, forming the Triple Entente. By 1913, Europe was divided into two blocs: the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy) and the Triple Entente (France, Russia, Britain).

[856] A delegation from the Princely Family traveled across Europe between January and May of 1909.

[857] 島田昌幸『オーストリア=ハンガリー外交における日本の位置付け―ボスニア併合危機期を中心に(1908-1909)』In: 法学政治学論究, 第62号, 2004.9, p. 217.

[858] 島田昌幸『オーストリア=ハンガリー外交における日本の位置付け―ボスニア併合危機期を中心に(1908-1909)』In: 法学政治学論究, 第62号, 2004.9, pp. 213-221.

“It is as well to promptly nail down to counter the statement that the Japanese have made a diplomatic effort for a treaty between Austria-Hungary and Japan for a "re-insurance" treaty against Russia. The Vienna Zeit seems to be responsible for what little trouble or amusement has been caused. (...) The story has not been contradicted either officially or semi-officially, though the Vienna correspondent of The Times states Baron von Aehrental is understood to have stated privately that the rumours are entirely baseless. The Japanese Government is believed to have declared officially that no Convention has been concluded, nor are negotiations proceeding with Austria-Hungary with an anti-Russian object.” (London and China Express - Friday 28 May 1909)

“*The rumours of an entente between Austria-Hungary and Japan are ridiculed in Japan, where they are regarded as a device to impair Russo-Japanese relations, which, says The Times Tokio correspondent, were never more cordial than they are at the present.*” (Evening News, London - Monday 31 May 1909)

This episode represents a previously unexplored chapter in the diplomatic history of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Japan, illustrating how, in addition to perceived or actual economic interests, international political considerations played a significant role in the relationship between the two empires in the early twentieth century.

Part of a six-panel series of ukiyo-e prints depicting the Tsukiji Foreign Settlement in detail. The prints show that the settlement contained not only hotels but also customs offices, residences, Japanese shops catering to foreigners, and even a red-light district. Illustrated by Utagawa Kuniteru II.; published in Meiji 2 (1869, harwardartmuseums.org)

Chapter Four.
Lived Experiences and Knowledge Transfers: Travelers and Residents in Travelogues, Diaries, and Newspaper Articles

European travelers in Japan – Globetrotterism and Insiderism: Art, Bureaucracy, and the Realities of 'Being Foreign in Japan' – High Life and Lowdown in the Treaty Ports – Travel history of Hungarians traveling to Japan – Contemporary literature related to Japan written by Hungarian travelers – Methodological suggestions for researching travel literature and the representation of Japan – Visual representations in Hungarian travel literature – The Affordability of Japan: What a Traveler Spent in the 1910s Compared to Wages of the Time in Japan and Hungary – Travel history of Japanese traveling to the Kingdom of Hungary – Contemporary literature related to Hungary written by Japanese travelers – Japan in Hungarian Publications; Hungary in Japanese Publications – Crossing Paths Outside of Hungary and Japan - At Journey's End: Hungarians in the Yokohama Foreign Cemetery

European travelers in Japan

Japan was first introduced to Europe through Marco Polo's *Travels*, compiled around 1298–1299. Although Polo spent many years in China, he never visited Japan. Instead, he depicted 'Cipangu' as a fantastical land overflowing with gold, relying entirely on hearsay from Chinese sources. (This portrayal bore little resemblance to 13th-century Japan.) In the 16th century, information about Japan reached Europe primarily through the writings and reports of Jesuit missionaries such as Luís Fróis (1532–1597) and João Rodrigues (1561–1633), both of whom spent decades in Japan. After Japan adopted restrictive foreign policies in the 1630s, the flow of information slowed but did not cease. Japan continued to evoke an aura of remoteness and exoticism, while its tangible presence in Europe was most evident in the export of porcelain and lacquerware, which had a significant influence on European decorative arts. Much later, two German doctors played a major role in spreading knowledge about Japan in Europe: Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716) and Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796–1866). Both arrived in Japan as physicians for the Dutch East India Company. Kaempfer lived in Japan from 1690 to 1692, while Siebold stayed there from 1823 to

1829. Kaempfer's writings on Japan were translated into English after his death in 1727; French and Dutch translations followed in 1729, and the first complete German edition appeared in the late 1770s. Siebold's multi-volume work on Japan was published in Amsterdam in serial form between 1832 and 1858.[1] These publications helped reinforce the image of Japan as a terra incognita, a largely unknown land to be explored from a European perspective at the close of the 19th century. Meanwhile, European industrialization was advancing, and 19th-century nationalism was gaining strength. With the rise of nation-states, Europe turned inward and sought to rediscover its own cultural roots. This intellectual climate provided fertile ground for exoticism. The encounter between late 19th-century Europe and Japan brought together two contrasting cultural-historical dynamics: while the West longed for an idealized vision of old Japan, Japan itself was absorbing Western technology and embarking on the path toward becoming a modern industrialized nation. For Japan, these technological advances were above all a means of safeguarding independence and avoiding colonization.

Nineteenth-century industrialization and economic growth produced a new class of wealthy bourgeois people, including merchants, factory owners, financiers, and educated professionals. Although they had money, they did not automatically possess the social prestige of the hereditary aristocracy. Travel became one way to acquire or display aristocratic cultural habits. They imitated the lifestyles of nobles and intellectual elites, especially the British ideal of the cosmopolitan traveler. Such imitation was a central motive for travel: newly wealthy people left their homes not only for leisure, but also to distance themselves from ordinary bourgeois routines and to demonstrate refinement, independence, and status. A second motive was the desire for play. Travel resembled play because it involved voluntary risk, unfamiliar places, challenges, and the excitement of the unknown. It also offered an escape from daily obligations. Most importantly, travel gave people temporary freedom from the social identities imposed on them at home. In their own country, a person's job, family role, class position, and reputation constrained their behaviour. Abroad, these constraints weakened. A traveler

[1] Claudia Delank: *Das Imaginäre Japan in der Kunst. »Japanbilder« vom Jugendstil bis zum Bauhaus* Iudicum Verlag, München, 1996., pp. 23-26.

could act more freely, experiment with a new version of themselves, and develop a stronger sense of personal autonomy.[2] By the second half of the 19th century, Japan had become a magnet for travelers from all around the world, a distinctive breed often referred to as 'globetrotters'. The term “globetrotter”, literally “earth ball walker”, emerged with a negative connotation, referring to elite travelers – mainly British and Americans – who prioritized rapid world touring over the educational purpose of traditional travel.[3] The globetrotter phenomenon in Japan can be traced back to 1867, when the *Pacific Mail Steamship Company* introduced regular service between San Francisco and Yokohama.[4] The term is said to have been used for the first time in a Japan-related publication by William Elliot Griffis in his book *The Mikado’s Empire*, published in 1876. He refers to them as “*circummundane tourists*” and notes that they “*have become so frequent and temporarily numerous in Yokohama as to be recognized as a distinct class. In the easy language of the port, they are called ‘globe-trotters*”. (At the time, one did not need to travel around the entire globe to be regarded as a globetrotter; even shorter journeys to Japan or East Asia could ‘suffice’.) An amusing taxonomy of this group appears in *Papierschmetterlinge aus Japan*, written by Curt Adolph Netto[5] in 1888, which also includes remarks on how a long-term foreign resident in Japan might have viewed them (the English translation of the original German was provided by Basil Hall Chamberlain in 1905 as per below):

> “*Globetrotter is the technical designation of a genus which, like the phylloxera and the Colorado beetle, had scarcely received any notice till recent times, but whose importance justifies us in devoting a few lines to it. It may be subdivided, for the most part, into the following species:* ***1. Globetrotter communis****. Sun-helmet, blue glasses, scant luggage, celluloid collars. His object is a maximum of travelling combined with a minimum of expense. He presents himself to you with some suspicious introduction or other, accepts with*

[2] Gyömrei Sándor: *Az utazási kedv története*. Gergely R. Könyvkereskedése, Budapest, 1934. pp. 131-133.
[3] Sissi Humel-Hammer: *Ein Erzherzog auf Grand Tour Quellen zur Weltreise Franz Ferdinands von Österreich-Este*. Diplomarbeit, Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz. 2021. p. 25.
[4] “*Globetrotters’ Japan: Places*” Visualizing Cultures at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and presented on MIT OpenCourseWare. https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/gt_japan_places/ (accessed: 2025 Sept.)
[5] Curt Adolph Netto was a German metallurgist and educator who lived in Japan from 1873 to 1886. During this period, he served as a foreign advisor to the Japanese government, and later as a professor of mining and metallurgy at the University of Tokyo.

ill-dissembled glee your lukewarm invitation to him to stay, generally appears too late at meals, makes daily enquiries concerning jinrikisha fares, frequently invokes your help as interpreter to smooth over money difficulties between himself and the jinrikishamen, offers honest curio-dealers who have the entré to your house one-tenth of the price they ask, and loves to occupy your time, not indeed by gaining information from you about Japan (all that sort of thing he knows already much more thoroughly than you do), but by giving you information about India, China, and America, – places with which you are possibly as familiar as he. When the time of his departure approaches, you must provide him with introductions even for places which he has no present intention of visiting, but which he might visit. You will be kind enough, too, to have his purchases here packed up, - but, mind, very carefully. You will also see after freight and insurance, and despatch the boxes to the address in Europe which he leaves with you. Furthermore, you will no doubt not mind purchasing and seeing to the packing of a few sundries which he himself has not had time to look after. ***2. Globetrotter scientificus.*** *Spectacles, microscope, a few dozen note-books, alcohol, arsenical acid, seines, butterfly-nets, other nets. He travels for special scientific purposes, mostly natural-historical (if zoological, then woe betide you!). You have to escort him on all sorts of visits to Japanese officials, in order to procure admittance for him to collections, museums, and libraries. You have to invite him to meet Japanese savants of various degrees, and to serve as interpreter on each such occasion. You have to institute researches concerning ancient Chinese books, to discover and engage the services of translators, draughtsmen, flayers and stuffers of specimens. Your spare room gradually develops into a museum of natural history – a fact which you can smell at the very threshold. In this case, too, the packing, passing through the custom-house, and despatching of the collections falls to your lot; and happy are you if the object arrive at home in a good state of preservation, and you have not to learn later on that such and such an oversight in packing has caused 'irreparable' losses. Certain it is that, for years after, you will be reminded from time to time of your inquisitive guest by letters wherein he requests you to give him the details of*

some scientific speciality whose domain is disagreeably distant from your own, or to procure for him some creature or other which is said to have been observed in Japan at some former period. ***3. Globetrotter elegans*** *is provided with good introductions from his government, generally stops at a legation, is interested in shooting, and allows the various charms of the country to induce him to prolong his stay.* ***4. Globetrotter independens.*** *Travels in a stream-yacht, generally accompanied by his family. Chief goal of his journey: an audience of the Mikado.* ***5. Globetrotter princeps.*** *Princes or other dignitaries recognisable by their numerous suite, and who undertake the round journey (mostly on a man-of-war) either for political reasons or for purposes of self-instruction. This species is useful to the foreign residents, in so far as the receptions and fêtes given in their honour create an agreeable diversion.* ***6. Globetrotter desperatus****, who expends his uttermost farthing on a ticket to Japan with the hope of making a fortune there, but who, finding no situation, has at last to be carted home by some cheap opportunity at the expense of his fellow-countrymen.* ***7. Globetrotter dolosus****, who travels under some high-sounding name and with a doubtful banking account, merely in order to put as great a distance as possible betwixt himself and the home police.* ***8. Globetrotter locustus****, the species that travels in swarms, perpetually dragged around the universe by Cook and the likes of Cook.* ***9. Globetrotter amabilis****, a species which is fortunately not wanting and which is always welcome. I mean the old friends and the new, whose memory lives fresh in the minds of our small community, connected as it is with the recollection of happy hours spent together. Their own hearts will tell them that not they, but others, are pointed at in the foregoing – perhaps partly too harsh – description."*[6]

Uncertainty surrounds any attempt to reconstruct the exact number of globetrotters who reached Japan during the period 1868–1913, making it almost impossible to determine these figures retrospectively. We do have some sparse statistics, though: the contemporary Hungarian press provided figures based on the *Journal des Débats* – in

[6] Basil Hall Chamberlain: *Japanese Things - Being Notes on Various Subjects Connected with Japan*. Charles E. Tuttle Co., Rutland, Vermont & Tokyo, Japan. 1971. pp. 212-215.

1902, 13,709 globetrotters visited Japan, and in 1905, 16,530. According to Japanese authorities, leisure travelers brought 18.7 million yen into Japan in 1903, 15.6 million yen in 1904, and 18 million yen in 1905.[7] In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the significant role of globetrotters in intercultural relations, which has led to the development of a wide range of studies, including the relatively young fields of travel history and travel literature.[8] Researchers of travel history primarily work with sources from travel literature, which means that travellers who left behind written accounts are valued much more highly than those who did not. Travelers of the time can be classified from a psychological perspective: from the sensitive to the choleric; from the 'philosophical' travelers, driven by disinterested curiosity and an interest in local morals and customs, to the 'technological' travelers, who would even visit factories or go on study trips.[9] Based on this classification, we can say that at the turn of the century, the former category applied to Hungarian travelers, while the latter applied to Japanese travelers.

Globetrotterism and Insiderism: Art, Bureaucracy, and the Realities of 'Being Foreign in Japan'

To understand the practices and perceptions of globetrotterism, it is useful to examine how 19th- and early 20th-century travel has been interpreted within academic scholarship. Northrop Frye considered travel one of the key literary archetypes.[10] Judith Adler conceptualized travel as a performed art (*ars*) – a practice shaped by historically specific codes, norms, and material conditions.[11] Travel, in this sense, engages the body and the senses, while travel writing conveys both its cultural embeddedness and its lived immediacy. Adler's use of 'art' recalls the early modern discourse on *ars apodemica* and the Latin *ars*, which carries the dual meanings of 'art' and 'craft'. Travel

[7] Budapesti Hirlap, 1906-09-15.
[8] Glant Tibor: *Magyar nyelvű amerikai utazási irodalom a XIX. század második felében: bibliográfiai áttekintés*, In.: A szavak szépsége, avagy a bibiliográfus igazsága. Tisztelgés Vadon Lehel 70. születésnapján Eger, Amerikanisztika Tanszék EKF, 2012. p. 620.
[9] Peter Burke: *Útmutatás az utazástörténet számára*. In: Korall Társadalomtörténeti Folyóirat, 2006. 26. szám. ford.: Kármán Gábor; pp. 5-24.
[10] Northrop Frye: *Anatomy of Criticism*. Princeton University Press, 1957., p. 57.
[11] Judith Adler: *Travel as Performed Art*. In: The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 94, No. 6 (May, 1989), p. 1371.

is frequently seen as a cultural practice and a transformative process, through which individuals engage with others, develop intercultural awareness, and attain self-understanding. It encompasses cultural comparison, translation, and construction, highlighting both the distinctions and connections among societies. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, travel was often intertwined with power dynamics, taking place in transcultural spaces characterized by inequality and conflict.[12] One example of power dynamics in practice can be seen in the use of rickshaws, invented in Japan at the start of the Meiji period, which became a hallmark of the tourist experience in Tokyo and Yokohama. They reflected Japan's blend of Western influence and 'Oriental charm', yet the master-servant relationship between foreign riders and Japanese pullers added a colonial undertone. Traveling by rickshaw shaped travel writing, reducing the landscape to fleeting snapshots and vignettes. A rickshaw ride was considered an essential part of any account of treaty ports and Tokyo, or excursions to Kamakura or Nikko.[13] Rickshaw rides offered tourists a privileged, close-up view of Japanese laborers, often inspiring highly detailed and sometimes eroticized descriptions. British travelers frequently noted the near-nudity of rickshaw pullers outside urban areas, emphasizing their muscular, bronzed bodies and the naturalness of their appearance, reflecting both fascination and the exoticizing gaze of Western visitors, such as Daniel Pidgeon:

> "*As we got further from Yokohama, the coolies, whom we met drawing loads and jinrickshas, wore nothing but a waistcloth. The jinrickisha coolies, when in the country, stow their clothes under the seat of the vehicle, and only resume them on nearing the town, where, since the Europeanization of the Government, the police have orders to prevent nudity. This is a pity, for naturalia non sunt turpia,*[14] *and semi-nudity is perfectly natural to Japan, where, as in the tropics, the work of a coolie would be insupportable in clothes. Certainly nothing can be finer than the view of these bronzed and muscular bodies, the smooth, clean skin shining with healthy perspiration, and condition visible in every pose and movement.*"[15]

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[12] Bahman Zarrinjooee: *Travel, Robert Byron and the Metamorphosis of Self*. Freien Universität Berlin, PhD Thesis, 2006. p. 16., 22.
[13] Hannah Shepherd: *'Strange Kaleidoscopic Scenes': Western Representations of Japanese Cities in Meiji, 1868-1912.* In: The Princeton Journal of East Asian Studies, Jun 2013. p. 107.
[14] a Latin phrase that translates roughly to "*natural things are not shameful*" or "*what is natural is not indecent*"
[15] Daniel Pidgeon: *An Engineer's Holiday or Notes of a Round Trip*, London: K. Paul, Trench, & Co., 1883., p. 257.

As Ágnes Balajthy notes, the rise of modern scientific thought – shaped by Francis Bacon's and John Locke's empiricism, which emphasized observation and inductive reasoning – combined with pragmatic economic interests in describing newly encountered lands, gave rise to a new discourse on travel. In eighteenth-century England, the Royal Society played a central role in this shift, establishing methodological protocols for travelers that specified what kind of information to record, how to observe, and what linguistic register to employ. One key requirement, for instance, was the keeping of a daily journal. This methodological framework influenced not only scientific expeditions but also the travel practices of Europe's social elite: handbooks for young aristocrats undertaking the Grand Tour likewise stressed direct observation and the collection of 'useful' knowledge about local flora, fauna, and culture. Within this intellectual climate, the scientific travelogue emerged – an ostensibly objective, concrete record of personal experience that claimed authenticity through a kind of 'naive empiricism'. Travel was closely linked to infrastructural improvements – better roads, expanding railways, and ocean routes during the *steam century* – which made journeys faster and more comfortable, while lower costs allowed people from diverse social backgrounds, including many women, to travel abroad. By the 19th century, travel was no longer seen merely as a necessary duty but increasingly as a form of leisure and entertainment.[16] At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the acquisition of durable consumer goods and the "consumption" of leisure – particularly through travel and tourism – emerged as major priorities for consumers. The 18th-century grand tour, initially reserved for aristocrats and the landed gentry, only became accessible to the upper middle class in the latter half of the century, helping to democratize travel. Yet the role of the tourist quickly acquired a stigma, partly due to the refined education and social status of its early participants. The shifting social meanings of travel in Europe foreshadowed similar dynamics in Japan's embrace of Western leisure and domestic travel. The Meiji-era practice of summer retreat began as a private initiative led by foreign elites and was only in the 1890s promoted to the broader public

[16] Balajthy Ágnes: *Egy Eredendő Máshol - Az utazás művészete a közelmúlt magyar irodalmában*. Debrecen University Press 2019. pp. 17-20.

as a “civilizing” activity. Hakone became one of Japan’s earliest mountain proto-resorts, attracting Western visitors from 1869 for its hot springs, pleasant mountain climate, scenic beauty, and easy access from Tokyo and Yokohama. Early accounts by foreign travelers praised its hospitality, affordable accommodations, and impressive views. From the 1860s to the 1890s, Japanese views toward Western leisure were ambivalent. While elites adopted practices such as vacations, mountain climbing, and sea bathing as symbols of refinement and modernity, the emerging middle class found them unfamiliar and less appealing. With the rise of nationalism in the 1890s, attitudes became more divided – some saw Western leisure as a mark of progress, while others regarded it with growing skepticism.[17]

British travel writing flourished between 1867 and 1909, as the expansion of the British Empire made travel safer and more accessible for adventurers and explorers. Travelers are usually considered dynamic, as their identities and perspectives evolve during their journeys, whereas tourists tend to be static, experiencing little personal transformation.[18] From the 1900s onward, visitors to Japan often fell into a grey area, gradually moving toward the more static, tourist-like category. In English, the terms tourism and tourist, which first appeared as neutral synonyms for “traveler” at the end of the 18th century, soon took on negative connotations.[19] In the early 1870s, Thomas Cook, founder of the travel company that still carries his name, launched globetrotter tourism with his first round-the-world tour. Departing Liverpool in 1872, his group crossed North America, sailed to Japan and other parts of Asia, toured India, and returned via the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean, completing the journey in 222 days. Cook had started organizing small group tours in Britain in the late 1840s, personally coordinating excursions, transportation, and accommodations. He gained national recognition by arranging affordable travel to the 1851 Great Exhibition and soon expanded tours throughout Europe, with Egypt and Palestine becoming popular destinations. Cook’s pioneering journey inspired competitors to create their own global

[17] W. Puck Brecher: *Contested Utopias: Civilization and Leisure in the Meiji Era*. In: Asian Ethnology Volume 77, Numbers 1&2 • 2018, pp. 33–39.
[18] Bahman Zarrinjooee: *Travel, Robert Byron and the Metamorphosis of Self*. Freien Universität Berlin, PhD Thesis, 2006. p. 23.
[19] Balajthy Ágnes: *Egy Eredendő Máshol - Az utazás művészete a közelmúlt magyar irodalmában*. Debrecen University Press 2019. pp. 38-39.

routes and even influenced literary works such as Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*.[20]

Language-specific etymological observations provide insight into how different languages encode cultural attitudes toward travel. In Hungarian, the verb "*utazni*" (to travel) is derived from "*út"* (road), thus linking the act of travelling more closely to the path or journey itself than to the destination. In German, the words *Reise* and *reisen* retain a sense of "rising" (related to the English verb *to rise*), suggesting continual forward movement and progression. By contrast, terms related to *tourism*, derived from the French tournée or "*tour*", frame travel more as a cyclical journey than an open-ended venture. The English word *travel*, originating from the medieval *travail* – meaning arduous labor or toil[21] – underscores the often challenging dimension of travel, emphasizing it as a task or undertaking rather than mere leisure.[22] Mark Cocker aptly captures the role of hardships in travel:

> "*(...) the traveller thrives on the alien, the unexpected, even the uncomfortable and challenging. In fact, the more difficult the journey and the more circumstances are stacked against them, generally the fuller the travel experience. This element of opposition, of having to react to the places and people encountered, is at the heart of travel.*"[23]

When we consider how difficult and challenging travel once was, one theme that occasionally emerges in Japan-related travel literature is the seasickness that travelers experienced on their voyage to Japan, when sea travel was the only option. Nearly every letter and diary composed on board, along with memoirs written years afterward, bears witness to the profound physiological suffering endured by travelers. Serious storms and typhoons could turn a sea voyage into a stomach-churning struggle against the elements. Moreover, the monotony of long weeks at sea made it difficult for travelers to distract themselves from their discomfort. In such circumstances, it is unsurprising

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[20] "*Globetrotters' Japan: Places*" Visualizing Cultures at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and presented on MIT OpenCourseWare. https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/gt_japan_places/ (accessed: 2025 Sept.)

[21] The term "travail" is derived from the Latin word *tripalium*, which referred to a device used for torture. Over time, the meaning of *tripalium* evolved. In Old French, the verb *travailler* (to work) originally meant "to torment" or "to suffer" and later came to signify "to work hard" or "to labor".

[22] Balajthy Ágnes: *Egy Eredendő Máshol - Az utazás művészete a közelmúlt magyar irodalmában*. Debrecen University Press 2019. p. 35.

[23] Mark Cocker: *Loneliness and Time: The Story of British Travel Writing*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1992.

that many focused all their energy on reaching their desired destination as quickly as possible; we can only imagine how great a relief it must have been to arrive in Japan. At the same time, those more resistant to seasickness – experienced sailors and seasoned travelers – often treated the situation with sarcastic humor. As they put it at the time, they had "*ample opportunity to observe the tragicomic episodes of seasickness in their less fortunate fellow travelers*".[24] According to one anecdote, in the late 1800s, a Hungarian traveler on an Austrian ship bound for Japan read the following Austrian blessing on a plaque in his cabin: "*Zusammen durchgebrachte Todesgefahr bringt die Herzen nache zu einander*", meaning, "*Mortal dangers endured together bring hearts closer to one another*". Some Hungarian travelers cited a Latin saying: "*Qui nescit orare, pergat ad mare*" meaning, "*He who does not know how to pray should go to sea*". The afflicted sought to lighten their plight by borrowing other foreign phrases – French "*mal de mer"* or Italian "*mal di mare"* – and by dignifying the inevitable vomiting as a tribute to Old Neptune or St. Ulrich. (Those who were largely unaffected by seasickness employed the nautical folkloric expression "*tweak Father Neptune's self by the beard*" to describe teasing or provoking the god of the sea by refusing to yield to it.)[25] Regarding who was thought to be most affected by seasickness, it is remarkable that well into the 20th century, medical science, like folklore, often regarded it as primarily a *female* affliction, reflecting the enduring assumption that women, as the "weaker sex", were more susceptible – a belief that could even become self-fulfilling.[26] Yet, regardless of sex, neither foreign expressions nor appeals to gods and saints could stave off the misery – and that was when 'modern' medicinal practices came storming onto the deck, promising relief, albeit with a decidedly dark flair. Standard treatments at the time ranged from harmless solutions, such as ice-cold carbonated water, chilled champagne or sherry[27], abdominal pressure bandages, antipyrine injections, and

[24] Bernáth Géza: *Keletázsiai utazás*. Nyomatott Kecskeméten, Szilády Károly fiánál, 1873. p. 2. Translated by the author

[25] Joan Druett: *Hen frigates - passion and peril, nineteenth-century women at sea.* Touchstone, New York, 1999. p. 36.

[26] Bess Beatty: *Traveling Beyond Her Sphere: American Women on a European Grand Tour, 1814 To 1914*. New Adacemia Publishing, 2016. p. 36., 41.

[27] The belief that alcohol could soothe the torments of seasickness may have converted even the most committed teetotalers into willing imbibers. Bess Beatty: *Traveling Beyond Her Sphere: American Women on a European Grand Tour, 1814 To 1914*. New Adacemia Publishing, 2016. p. 40.

smelling salts, to more extreme measures, including *cocaine or morphine injections*.[28] Most remedies didn't do much, though some select travelers treated with potent drugs may have found the arrival in Japan unexpectedly memorable – confirming the notion that Japan was a *highly* sought-after destination. Others, seeking *relief* through different means (yet determined to remain on the hardcore end of the pain-management spectrum), were dosed by the ship's doctor with calomel (mercurous chloride)[29] or prussian acid (hydrogen cyanide)[30] – cures of an explicitly dangerous nature, which, if the dosage was miscalculated, were almost certain to make their arrival in Japan twice as miserable as the voyage itself, or, in extreme cases, provided a *final* relief of a rather permanent sort. Besides the ineffective or harmless remedies and the creative use of dangerous and highly potent drugs, it is remarkable that perhaps the most ambitious solution for treating seasickness at the time came in the form of an invention – an "anti-seasickness" ship – and even more remarkable that the idea was actually realized. The *SS Bessemer* was an experimental British paddle steamer launched in 1874, designed by Sir Henry Bessemer to reduce seasickness. Its passenger saloon was suspended on gimbals and hydraulically leveled to remain horizontal despite the ship's motion. Despite this innovative design, the ship faced operational problems, including steering difficulties (mostly due to the weight of the 'anti-sickness saloon' in the middle and the heavy engines) and collisions during its maiden voyage, which led to canceled public trips. The vessel was eventually sold for scrap in 1879, but it is remembered as a bold yet ultimately unsuccessful attempt to address seasickness through engineering.[31]

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[28] Tóth Gergely: *Japán-Magyar Kapcsolattörténet 1869-1913*. Gondolat, Budapest, 2018. pp. 257-259.

[29] A widely used 18th–19th century medicine, believed to cleanse the body by inducing purging. It was prescribed for a broad range of ailments – including fever, liver problems, constipation, and even seasickness. It was also given for indigestion or nausea of many kinds, though it was not a specific or highly recommended seasickness cure, merely one of many general remedies people tried. Because calomel contains mercury, it is now known to be highly toxic, capable of causing tremors, gum damage, mental confusion, and organ failure through chronic exposure. Once regarded as a universal remedy, it fell out of favor in the early 20th century as the dangers of mercury poisoning became evident and was eventually banned by mid-century. See: Douglas R. Burgess: *Engines of empire: steamships and the Victorian imagination.* Stanford University Press, 2016. p. 177.

[30] A volatile and highly toxic compound once used in minute medicinal doses. In the 19th century it was prescribed for respiratory complaints, nervous disorders, and sometimes seasickness, usually administered as a few drops in water or on sugar. Some ship surgeons gave it to calm nausea or the nerves during sea voyages, but it was not a specific or widely recommended seasickness cure – simply one of many experimental remedies people tried. Because hydrogen cyanide is extremely poisonous, even small overdoses could be lethal. As medical and chemical knowledge advanced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, its risks became clear and it was abandoned as a treatment. Today prussic acid is regarded solely as a dangerous poison. See: James Moore: *Pigeon guided missiles, and 49 other ideas that never took off.* History Press, 2011. p. 196.

[31] James Moore: *Pigeon guided missiles, and 49 other ideas that never took off.* History Press, 2011. p. 196.

Time aboard ships in the late nineteenth century was shaped by both technological progress and the peculiar experience of isolation at sea. Although global networks of communication and transportation had expanded, timekeeping remained imprecise – the worldwide system of time zones proposed by Sandford Fleming in 1876 had not yet been universally adopted, even after the International Meridian Conference of 1884. As a result, clocks were often adjusted daily as ships moved east or west, a practice that some travelers greeted with amusement. Life on board offered contrasting experiences. For some, ship time became a period of productive isolation, conducive to writing, intellectual work, or artistic creation; the confined environment encouraged focus and reflection. For others, however, the voyage was marked by monotony and unproductiveness – a "blank spot" in life, characterized by enforced idleness and a sense of slowed time, despite the 'modern' speed of steamships.[32] Boredom was not limited to the decks of ships bound for Japan; early Meiji treaty ports also experienced significant idleness due to long waits between trade shipments and the absence of established telegraph lines. To alleviate this, recreational sports flourished, including billiards, bowling, horse racing, regattas, football, marathons, rugby, tennis, cricket, and even traditional British games such as quoits.[33]

Although life at sea was rarely comfortable, even the most mundane routines held moments of wonder. Showers, for instance, were a rare luxury because fresh water was considered precious and strictly rationed. Most travelers bathed in seawater instead – an experience that was extraordinary in its own right. The ocean's water seemed alive, teeming with bioluminescent plankton that made every splash shimmer with a magical, phosphorescent glow, bursting with flashes of electric blue and turquoise light that traced travelers' hands, feet, and bodies in ephemeral trails.[34]

Once ashore, early foreign travelers and residents in Japan faced severe dangers before the Meiji Restoration, including hostility from samurai and frequent attacks that made travel outside the treaty ports unsafe. By 1870, assaults on foreigners

[32] Tomasz Ewertowski: *Slavs on Steamships. Steamship Travels between Europe and Asia, 1869–1890.* In: Poznańskie Studia Slawistyczne NR 23 (2022). p. 33., 35.
[33] Quoits is a traditional British game in which players throw metal or rubber rings (called "quoits") at a spike or target, aiming to land them as close as possible. It was popular in rural Britain and similar to the modern game of horseshoes. Darren Lee Swanson: *Treaty Port Society and the Club in Meiji Japan: Clubbism, Athleticism and the Public Sphere*, Phd Thesis, University of Sydney, 2016. pp. 329-331. http://hdl.handle.net/2123/16921
[34] Kovács Richárd: *Hamburgtól Yokohamáig*. Orvosi Hetilap, 1909. 29. szám. p. 517.

by disenfranchised samurai had largely ceased, but petty crimes by “un-consuled Europeans” became common, prompting residents to carry pistols for protection. Encounters of the former, less friendly type were described in 1869 by a Hungarian traveller who was part of the Austro-Hungarian East Asian Expedition:

> “*All the Europeans we encountered along the way were armed with revolvers, and every carriage or European horseman was accompanied by two or three yakunin as escorts. Since moving his seat to Yeddo, the Mikado had organized an escort of reliable armed guards to accompany Europeans from Yeddo to Yokohama and ensure their safety. (...) we encountered two Daimios, and there was no longer any opportunity to turn right or left in front of them. The Yakunins, in order to protect ourselves from the inevitable harm, spurred their horses and galloped past the Daimios, signaling us to do the same. We did not need to be told twice, and galloped past the Daimios, who were being carried in sedan chairs. Their officers walked beside them, angry and glaring at us with eyes sparkling with hatred. No sooner had we escaped this unpleasant encounter than another Daimio came towards us on horseback. Some of his officers held the reins and stirrups of his horse, three or four walked in front, and the same number followed behind. The old Daimio could barely sit on his horse, but we galloped past him just as we had done before, which was perhaps not unnecessary this time either, as we encountered similar angry glances from his entourage as we had a few moments earlier. The Japanese officers did no harm with their angry glances, but if we were to ride slowly past them, they would inevitably stop our horses, and if we did not kneel before the Daimio, we were likely to come into somewhat unpleasant contact with their swords. In hindsight, I can comfortably say that my pride would not have allowed me to kneel, but if the officers had actually stopped us and forced us to do so, I certainly would not dare to claim that I would not have done so. On several occasions, such encounters ended very badly for Europeans, especially in the early days, when they did not yet know that the Daimios punished what they considered to be disrespect towards their lords with death.*”[35]

[35] Bernát Géza: *Keletázsiai utazás*. 1873. Pp. 190-195. Translated by the author.

In the late 19th century, Japan's treaty ports were both dangerous and alluring, attracting people from various countries and social backgrounds in search of fortune and new beginnings. Contemporary descriptions of Kobe liken its atmosphere to that of a North American gold rush:

> "*A cloud of so-called traders, the scum of the foreign communities from the Chinese ports, rushed ashore with indecent haste... By evening rows and rows of canvas shanties had been built on the Concession ground, whilst a few Japanese houses had been taken possession of and were already in full swing as grog shops. So that, long before dark, this peaceful, orderly Japanese town, in which for centuries riot had been unknown, was converted into a place where all hell seemed let loose, with Japanese and Europeans rolling around drunk, fighting, bawling, chasing women, and behaving in a manner which would not have been tolerated anywhere in the civilised world. It was a coarse and degrading debauch, this inauguration of Christian civilisation.*"[36]

A Hungarian traveler, Benedek Balogh Barátosi, looked back at the early days of treaty ports like this:

> "*In the early days, the hatred toward Europeans also began to fade. People started to get to know and respect them. In this regard, however, we find a regrettable setback. Some of the foreigners who came here certainly did not deserve such respect. Respect is due to the many outstanding individuals who, with conscientious integrity, joined those striving to create a new situation; but those half-educated, adventurous individuals who plunged the country into aimless experiments, or who took on positions for which they were unqualified, caused enormous damage to the state and to the reputation of Westerners. We see barbers in medical positions, and skilled factory workers are often listed as engineers. (...) Yet the most dangerous were those adventurous scoundrels who stormed into Japan with the sole aim of getting rich quickly and at any cost.*"[37]

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[36] Gambier, J. W: *Links in my Life on Land and Sea*. London. 1907., pp. 372-373.

[37] Baráthosi Balogh Benedek: *Japán, a felkelő nap országa. Baráthosi Turáni Könyvei.* Szerzői kiadás Budapest, 1930. p. 111. Translated by the author.

The uncertainties of early Meiji Japan did not spare even visiting dignitaries, who at times found themselves facing unexpected security threats. In May 1891, during Tsarevich Nicholas of Russia's tour of Japan, an incident occurred in which a fanatical policeman attempted to assassinate him near Lake Biwa. Nicholas' cousin, Prince Georgios of Greece, prevented serious harm. Nicholas, traveling on a 10-month Asian grand tour, had particularly enjoyed his stay in Japan, describing it as heavenly. Despite the attack, relations remained cordial: the Japanese government issued apologies, the assassin was punished, and Nicholas left Japan early but bore no personal ill will, viewing the act as the work of an isolated fanatic.[38]

Later on, these threats shifted from violence to poor sanitation and widespread disease, with serious outbreaks still occurring in Japanese cities during the 1890s.[39] There were cases in which people contracted typhoid from eating raw oysters and succumbed to the disease several weeks later. Typhoid fever is caused by *Salmonella enterica serotype Typhi*. Infection occurs when food or water contaminated with fecal matter from an infected person is ingested. Before the advent of antibiotics and modern sanitation, typhoid was a major cause of death worldwide, particularly in densely populated or coastal areas. Oysters are known to filter large volumes of seawater, and if the water is contaminated with sewage, as was common near cities and ports around 1900, the oysters can concentrate pathogens within their tissues. Eating them raw, without cooking to kill the bacteria, made them an ideal source of typhoid infection. By the late 19th century, medical researchers and public health officials had already recognized this link. In fact, in the 1890s, several documented typhoid outbreaks in the U.S. and Europe were traced to raw oysters harvested from polluted coastal waters. Cities such as New York and London began banning oyster beds near sewage outlets around the turn of the century due to repeated typhoid and cholera outbreaks.

The globetrotter did not merely cross continents; he also had to navigate unexpected Japanese entourages, elbow his way past drunken fellow Europeans, and brave the invisible landscape of bacteria, as we have seen. Yet such inconveniences did

[38] Miriam Schneider: *Tsarevich Nicholas of Russia and Prince Georgios of Greece: A tale of two princes* http://heirstothethrone-project.net/?page_id=2357 (accessed: 2025 Nov)
[39] Darren Swanson: *A Place for the Dead – the Foreign Cemeteries of Kobe and Osaka 1867 – to the Present Day*. 2010. pp. 5-6.

little to diminish the allure of globetrotterism. Globetrotterism can be understood in multiple ways: it may refer to the practice or lifestyle of extensive, often continuous international travel, characterized not merely by moving between countries but by an intentional engagement with diverse cultures, environments, and experiences. It encompasses the aesthetic, experiential, and social dimensions of travel, often emphasizing curiosity, adaptability – or, at times, the difficulties arising from a failure to adapt – and prolonged exposure to the 'unfamiliar'. (In the 21st century, the notion of such travels are often paradigmatically described as elite, European, male, bourgeois, scientific, heroic, recreational movements across space.)[40] A tangible manifestation of the globetrotterism phenomenon is the publication of travelogues and travel accounts – a literary genre that remains somewhat ill-defined even in academic circles.[41] The concept of travel literature and the range of texts it encompasses are still debated: some scholars consider it a hybrid genre or a group of genres that developed almost in parallel with modern fiction, emerging prominently during the Romantic period. Yet it has retained a marginal status; for example, Anglo-Saxon literary discourse often treats these works primarily as non-fiction rather than literature. (Among European cultures, British culture has maintained the most continuous tradition of travel and travel writing, which holds a prominent place in collective memory. Academic study of travel literature was only institutionalized in the Anglo-Saxon world in the 1980s–1990s. Its interdisciplinary nature allows research to draw on history, tourism studies, cultural anthropology, and ethnography.)[42] Jan Borm offers a distinction between a *broader* category: *travel writing* (or *travel literature, Reiseliteratur, littérature de voyage*); and a *narrower* one: *travel books* (or *travelogues, Reisebuch, récit de voyage*). Travel writing encompasses a thematic group spanning multiple genres, while travel books constitute a more specific, predominantly non-fictional genre, typically written in the first-person singular, where the author, narrator, and traveling protagonist are assumed to be the same individual, though the boundaries of this category remain fluid.[43] Many scholars

[40] Jan Mrázek (ed.): *Escaping Kakania - Eastern European Travels in Colonial Southeast Asia*. Central European University Press, 2024. p. 6.
[41] For a comprehensive overview of historical and theoretical perspectives, see: Grzegorz Moroz: *A Generic History of Travel Writing in Anglophone and Polish Literature*. Brill, 2020.
[42] Balajthy Ágnes: *Egy Eredendő Máshol - Az utazás művészete a közelmúlt magyar irodalmában*. Debrecen University Press 2019. p. 13.
[43] Jan Borm: *Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology* In: Perspectives on Travel

rather define travel writing as a non-fiction genre documenting real journeys, while acknowledging that such texts often employ fictionalization techniques. The first half of the twentieth century is often described as the 'golden age of travel literature'. Common discursive patterns in works from the 1868-1913 period include a *fascination with the 'primitive' as the Other of Judeo-Christian culture* and an *eroticized engagement with foreignness*. Depictions of the exotic are frequently paired with *pointed critiques of European society*, reflecting a Freudian-inspired nostalgia for a more 'natural' state of being. Many travelogues portrayed cultural encounters through motifs of *decay and contamination*, expressing anxieties that the relentless advance of modernity threatened the authenticity of traditional ways of life preserved in distant regions. Throughout the history of travel literature, expectations of factuality, realism, verifiability, and authenticity have always been accompanied by epistemological dilemmas about the inseparability of fact and fiction. A well-known example is Marco Polo's account, commonly associated with the nickname *Il Milione*, which came from his family nickname 'Emilione' and ironically referred to the supposed lies in his descriptions. In the context of early modern geographical discoveries, a new concept of authenticity emerged. No longer tied to canonized, second-hand knowledge, authenticity came to rest on the principle of *autopsy* – the traveler's authority as a direct witness. The credibility of travel narratives was thus guaranteed by the author's claim to have personally observed the strange and astonishing *wonders* of the New World.[44] At the same time, there is a lingering paradox of authenticity in travel writing: travel writers and travelers strive for a fully 'authentic' and complete experience, yet such an experience is inherently unattainable, as it exists outside the self and is always mediated by perception, interpretation, and representation. This mediation is further shaped by the variety of roles travel writers assume – sometimes simultaneously, sometimes in turn – including those of scholar, ethnographer, anthropologist, cultural translator, biographer, novelist, or social commentator. Dennis Porter argues that the fundamental activity in travel writing is to

Writing, edited by Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs, Ashgate, 2004 (Studies in European Cultural Transition 19), pp. 13–26.

[44] Balajthy Ágnes: *Egy Eredendő Máshol - Az utazás művészete a közelmúlt magyar irodalmában*. Debrecen University Press 2019. pp. 33., 28-29.

represent the world, which has political as well as aesthetic-cognitive aspects.[45] Travel writing often mixes ethnographic and analytical observation with personal, emotional, and anecdotal elements. It also tends to domesticate the "other" and reflect the traveler's self-centered perspective and desires.[46]

In Japanese literature, the broad term for travel writing is "kikōbungaku" (紀行文学), a genre closely related to but distinct from diary literature (nikkibungaku: 日記文学). While both often share a similar form – typically written as daily, dated entries – not every diary describes a journey, nor is every journey recorded as a diary. In literary studies, the two are often discussed together because of their overlapping styles and themes. In early Japan, travel writing was largely confined to domestic journeys to well-known scenic or sacred locations. Few Japanese ventured abroad before the Tokugawa period, and those who did left little of literary value behind. The Tokugawa government's closed-country policy then halted almost all overseas travel, with rare exceptions such as shipwrecked sailors whose accounts were more documentary than literary. It was not until the late Tokugawa and early Meiji periods that overseas travel began to flourish again. In the early Meiji years, traveling abroad was extremely expensive and limited to the wealthy or those officially sponsored by the government – typically students, scholars, or diplomats sent to learn from the West. Their travelogues expressed curiosity and wonder rather than aesthetic or poetic reflection. They served as observers and messengers, tasked with bringing back knowledge rather than traveling for leisure. For most Japanese of the time, the outside world was encountered indirectly – through translated Western texts and the travel accounts of others. Translations of works such as Samuel Smiles's *Self Help* (1871) and Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1878–80) became bestsellers, while Japanese writers introduced Western thought, customs, and technology to Japanese readers. As printing developed after the 1870s, travelogues became more widely circulated through newspapers, magazines, and books. This shift from private records to mass publication influenced the style of travel writing: authors began to write not only to inform but also to

[45] Dennis Porter: *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing*. New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1991.
[46] Bahman Zarrinjooee: *Travel, Robert Byron and the Metamorphosis of Self*. Freien Universität Berlin, Phd 2006., p. 27.

entertain, drawing inspiration from Western narrative techniques. Japanese travelers abroad were quite different from their Western contemporaries. Whereas European travelers of the Grand Tour were wealthy elites seeking to experience the past, nineteenth-century Japanese travelers often had modest means. Early Japanese travelers to Europe generally took a maritime route through Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean, stopping at British-controlled ports like Hong Kong, Singapore, Colombo, Aden, and Suez. Traveling on Western ships among predominantly Western passengers, they were immersed in Western customs, cuisine, and pastimes from the outset. Consequently, their encounter with European culture began well before their arrival, shaping how they viewed both Asia and Europe through a Western-influenced perspective.[47] Susanna Fessler argues that most Japanese travelers journeyed to the United States, England, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia. Their early accounts were filled with foreign concepts and terminology, but over time traditional Japanese sensibilities reemerged, blending the unfamiliar with the familiar. By the mid-Meiji period, travel had become more accessible. A growing number of Japanese traveled overseas independently, motivated by curiosity or personal goals rather than government missions. Japan's global engagement and victories, especially in the Russo-Japanese War (1905), fostered a sense of confidence and belonging in the modern world. Improvements in transportation, such as the Trans-Siberian Railway (1904) and advances in shipbuilding, made travel faster and more comfortable, further encouraging overseas exploration. In the early twentieth century, during the late Meiji period (1900–1912), a new generation of professional writers brought literary sophistication to travel writing. Their works reflected a deep familiarity with both Japanese and Western traditions, producing a hybrid form that merged traditional aesthetics with modern perspectives. Although political setbacks and discrimination abroad persisted, Japan's writers increasingly portrayed the world with confidence and nuance. By the end of the Meiji period, Japanese travel literature had transformed from personal records and factual reports into a refined literary genre. It combined observation, reflection, and artistry to express Japan's evolving relationship with the

[47] Susanna Fessler: *Musashino in Tuscany - Japanese Overseas Travel Literature, 1860-1912*. The University of Michigan Ann Arbor, 2004. p. 51.

modern world and its emerging identity as part of a global community.[48] Susanna Fessler offers a concise yet insightful observation on Japanese travelers: "*if Westerners traveled to see the past, nineteenth-century Japanese traveled to see the future, an unfamiliar world without poetic precedents, a world that they imagined would someday soon become their own*".[49]

Regarding Western globetrotter literature, Basil Hall Chamberlain, a prominent Japanologist and author of *Things Japanese* (first published in 1890), was rather critical of it, reserving general disdain for travel books, which he considered almost endlessly produced and often of poor quality. He dismissed novels outright, noting that they were works "*we have never been able to make up our mind to dip into*". Travel books fared little better: he described the general output as "*the ordinary low level of globe-trotting literature – twaddle enlivened by statistics at second hand*". One particularly entertaining target of his critique was *North Star and Southern Cross* by Miss Margaretha Wepper. Chamberlain did not refrain from calling her outright "*as mad as a March hare*" and he also noted that "*her idée fixe seems to have been that every foreign man in Yokohama and 'Jeddo' mediated an assault on her*". On the other hand, he praised Rudyard Kipling's *Letters to the Times*, 1892 as "*the most graphic ever penned by a globetrotter – but then what a globetrotter*". Overall, Chamberlain regarded globetrotter literature as largely frivolous, sensationalized, or exaggerated, with only occasional works rising above the general mediocrity.[50]

As travel to Japan expanded, so too did the demand for guidebooks: popular Baedeker *travel guides*, developed independently by Karl Baedeker in 1835 and John Murray in 1836, provided reliable, regularly updated information in a uniform, impersonal format. Intended purely for practical use, they helped shift the travelogue from a heterogeneous, functional form toward the literary realm of belles-lettres – writing valued for its aesthetic and literary qualities rather than merely informational purposes.

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[48] Susanna Fessler: *Musashino in Tuscany - Japanese Overseas Travel Literature, 1860-1912*. The University of Michigan Ann Arbor, 2004. pp. 2-182. Shukotsu Togawa's *23,000 Miles Through America and Europe* (戸川秋骨『欧米紀遊二万三千哩』1908) is regarded by Susanna Fessler as a masterful example of the genre and the most worthy of attention, since Togawa's clear and witty observations make it well worth reading for its sheer entertainment value. For an overview of Japanese travelogues, see: 富田仁 (編集)『事典・日本人の見た外国』, 2008. 日外アソシエーツ

[49] Susanna Fessler: *Musashino in Tuscany - Japanese Overseas Travel Literature, 1860-1912*. The University of Michigan Ann Arbor, 2004. p. 26.

[50] Basil Hall Chamberlain: *Japanese Things - Being Notes on Various Subjects Connected with Japan*. Charles E. Tuttle Co, Tokyo, 1971. Pp. 64-72.

Western travellers to Japan were soon accompanied by a growing range of guidebooks produced by commercial enterprises. In 1873, William Elliot Griffis published *The Tokio Guide*, combining personal impressions with commentary and practical advice. A decade later, Ernest Satow and A.G.S. Hawes produced the extensive *Handbook for Travellers in Central and Northern Japan*, (part of John Murray's *Handbooks for Travellers series*, commonly called the '*Murray Handbooks'*) which soon became both an essential travel guide and a scholarly resource. This was followed in 1889 by Basil Hall Chamberlain and W.B. Mason's *Handbook for Travellers in Japan*, an authoritative work that was regularly revised and remained popular well into the early 20th century.[51] Murray's guidebooks were analyzed by Daniel Milne, who notes that although they were eventually outsold by the German *Baedeker* series, they helped define the modern style of guidebooks – presented as objective, practical, and reliable – while remaining costly and targeted at educated, wealthy travelers. The Japan guide appeared in nine detailed editions of 500–600 pages, with strong sales such as 5,000 copies of the 1894 edition. Unlike other Murray titles, these were not owned by the Murray company, giving them a closer connection to Japan while still benefiting from the Murray brand name. While mostly factual, the guides drew on Romantic ideals, portraying Japan as a picturesque, exotic, and 'old' culture – frail, quaint, and pre-industrial, seemingly destined to be overtaken by the West. However, as Japan grew militarily powerful, the guides shifted to emphasize the enduring strength of Japanese traditions.[52]

In the 21st century, international travel is generally tied to the legally defined concept of citizenship and to official documents such as passports, and usually involves navigating bureaucratic procedures. By contrast, this was different in our research period of 1868–1913. After the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, many European states gradually abolished routine passport requirements, and travelers could often move across the continent with few restrictions. By the late nineteenth century, passports were rarely needed, though important exceptions remained: the Russian

[51] "*Globetrotters' Japan: Places*" Visualizing Cultures at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and presented on MIT OpenCourseWare. https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/gt_japan_places/ (accessed: 2025 Sept.)
[52] Daniel Milne: *Discourses on Japan at the End of the Nineteenth Century in Murray Guidebooks* In: 社会システム研究 - Social systems: political, legal and economic studies 2013, 16. pp. 135-149.

Empire and the Ottoman Empire maintained regular passport requirements, while countries such as Germany, Italy, and France sometimes reintroduced passport controls – particularly during periods of political tension.[53] The U.S., meanwhile, generally did not require passports for citizens to depart in peacetime during this period (passports were required during the U.S. Civil War and were later reintroduced during World War I), although many Americans still obtained passports voluntarily. Overall, the decades before World War I are frequently described as a period of relatively free movement compared to today. During the era of the Dual Monarchy (1867–1918), Hungarian border control was organized according to liberal principles, reflecting broader European practices. The guiding principle was that everyone enjoyed the right to choose their place of residence and that the free movement of persons could be restricted only in exceptional cases. By law, no passport was required to cross the state border of the Kingdom of Hungary – this was the general rule, while the passport requirement was the exception. If another country imposed a passport requirement on Hungarian citizens, Hungary could apply the same rule in return, based on the principle of reciprocity. Passports, as a means of administratively restricting free movement, were therefore only used in situations where such restrictions were already in force.[54] In the decades preceding the turn of the century, customs controls were carried out at the Austrian and Hungarian border sections of the Monarchy (excluding Liechtenstein, which formed a common customs area with Austria-Hungary), but passport controls and requirements existed only on routes leading to Russia, Romania, and Serbia.[55] In response to rising emigration in the 1880s, the Hungarian government initially monitored

[53] The Russian and the Ottoman Empire required travelers wishing to enter their territories to have their passports stamped by their diplomatic missions, effectively obtaining a visa. Romania introduced a similar requirement in 1891, but by the turn of the century, it was relaxed to apply only to travelers who had a consulate in their place of residence. See: Som Krisztián: *A magyar úti okmányok 1848–2012*, p. 56., Budapest 2014, Nemzetbiztonsági Szakszolgálat és Szemere Bertalan Magyar Rendvédelem-történeti Tudományos Társaság

[54] Dr. Parádi József: *A dualizmuskori magyar rendvédelem és határőrizet. A Magyar Királyi Határrendőrség*. In: Határrendészeti tanulmányok 2006/1. Különszám pp. 14-15.

[55] Som Krisztián: *A magyar úti okmányok 1848–2012*, p. 55., Budapest 2014, Nemzetbiztonsági Szakszolgálat és Szemere Bertalan Magyar Rendvédelem-történeti Tudományos Társaság; As a constituent state of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Hungary had real external borders only with countries that required passports, namely Serbia and Romania. All other borders were internal, including those with Croatia (and through it, Bosnia-Herzegovina) as well as with various Austrian provinces. Hungarians traveling to Austria did not need any travel documents to continue their journey westward. In fact, they did not even need any other form of identification, as such documents were still largely unknown in Europe. See: Dr. Bencsik Péter: *A Magyar Királyság útlevelei, kishatárforgalmi úti okmányai a dualizmus időszakában*. In:Határrendészeti tanulmányok 2006/1. Különszám p. 79.

mainly men of military age and those registered with emigration agencies. While authorities sought to discourage emigration, they avoided coercive measures. In 1897, carrying a passport became mandatory for emigrants. Therefore, during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's era, passports were closely associated with emigration, as they were primarily needed by those leaving the country.[56]

Countries outside Europe generally granted visa exemptions to foreign nationals entering their territory, but a number of countries – including Japan – required a domestic passport for certain internal travel, which was often issued on the basis of a certificate provided by the local diplomatic mission of the traveler's country of citizenship.[57] Foreigners were clearly dissatisfied with Japan's internal travel restrictions, as illustrated in the June 1875 edition of *Japan Punch*, which parodied the internal passport regulations as follows:

> "*The undersigned is allowed to travel subject to the following regulations. He is not to divert from the paths of rectitude nor to follow evil examples. He shall rise at six every morning and take a bath after which he shall breakfast on two eggs. He then shall travel two ri[58]-s and a half in the morning and rest at the inn named in schedule B and shall on no account go to any other. He shall lunch on tinned soup and preserved meat hermetically sealed, shall drink either claret or beer according to the drink he decided on taking before starting […] any infringement of these rules will subject bearer to confiscation of his passport and six months imprisonment.*"[59]

In the trade and shipping agreement concluded between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Japan in 1897, the issue of internal passports was addressed as follows:

> "*The Japanese government agrees that, even before the country was fully opened to Austrian and Hungarian subjects, the existing passport system shall be extended so that these subjects, upon presentation of a favorable certificate issued by the Austro-Hungarian Legation in Tokyo or by any of the*

[56] Dr. Bencsik Péter: *A Magyar Királyság útlevelei, kishatárforgalmi úti okmányai a dualizmus időszakában*. In:Határrendészeti tanulmányok 2006/1. Különszám pp. 79-82.
[57] Som Krisztián: *A magyar úti okmányok 1848–2012*, p. 57., Budapest 2014, Nemzetbiztonsági Szakszolgálat és Szemere Bertalan Magyar Rendvédelem-történeti Tudományos Társaság
[58] 里 (ri) – traditional Japanese unit of distance, ~3.927 km
[59] The Japan Punch 1875-1876 (Tokyo: Yūshōdo, 1999), p. 61.

Austro-Hungarian consulates located in open Japanese ports, may, upon request, obtain passports valid for the entire territory of the country and for a period not exceeding twelve months from the Imperial Foreign Office in Tokyo or from the prefectural authorities of the open port. It is understood that this reservation is subject to the existing laws and regulations applicable to Austrian or Hungarian subjects traveling in the Japanese Empire, and that it shall not affect those laws and regulations."[60]

As evidenced by the 1897 treaty between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Japan, access to the interior (内地旅行) became one of the central issues in treaty talks. Western diplomats, led by figures like Sir Harry Parkes (British diplomat who served as Minister to Japan), wanted rights for their citizens to travel and trade freely across Japan, while Japanese officials resisted, fearing the spread of foreign influence and the lack of jurisdiction over foreigners. To manage this, the Japanese government created the foreigner travel permit (外国人旅行免状) in 1875. This single-use permit, issued through consulates and the Foreign Ministry, allowed travel under strict conditions: routes and duration were limited, trade and tourism were prohibited, and travelers had to report regularly. In the first decades of the Meiji era, regulating domestic travel for foreigners served two main purposes: to keep foreigners separate from Japanese communities in the wake of cholera epidemics, and to prevent unsanctioned trade. Travelers were therefore restricted to their designated destinations and prohibited from conducting any business (diplomats needed no travel permits).[61] Although nearly all applications were approved, the system tightly controlled movement and imposed penalties for violations. Still, the permits marked the first real opening of Japan's interior to outsiders. Travelers and writers used them both to explore 'exotic' regions and to present their journeys as acts of cultural or national significance. Access to the interior was symbolic as well: for most tourists, treaty ports were not the destination but a transitional zone between their docked ships and the "real" Japan that awaited them inland. The modern outskirts of the ports were seen as an anomaly to be passed through quickly, in favor of the timeless,

[60] 1898. évi XXXII. törvénycikk a Japánnal 1897. évi deczember 5-én kötött kereskedelmi és hajózási szerződés beczikkelyezéséről. Translated by the Author

[61] W. Puck Brecher: *Contested Utopias: Civilization and Leisure in the Meiji Era*. In: Asian Ethnology Volume 77, Numbers 1&2 • 2018, pp. 37–38.

unchanging interior.[62] In 1899, with revised treaties in place, the restrictions were abolished. Foreigners were henceforth free to travel, reside, and trade anywhere in Japan – ending the old system and fulfilling a long-standing demand of the treaty powers.[63]

Well before the treaty revision, additional measures were taken to make travel and accommodation more convenient for foreigners. In the early 1890s, Japanese politicians and financiers proposed attracting foreign tourists to serve national interests: showcasing Japan's 'civilized' status, generating foreign currency to strengthen the economy and military, and ultimately supporting the goal of revising the unequal treaties. Tourism promotion in Japan involved coordinated efforts between the government, the railway industry, and the hotel sector, recognizing that Western-style accommodations and an expanding railway network were essential for enabling comfortable travel. Both public and private initiatives produced tourist guides for foreigners, emphasizing Japan's rich cultural heritage as the main attraction.[64] In March 1893, the Kihinkai (喜賓会, "Welcome Society of Japan")[65] was established to promote foreign travel. Eiichi Shibusawa, the father of Japanese capitalism, served as General Secretary, while Takashi Masuda, a prominent Meiji-era businessman inspired by Paris and the French tourism system during his 1887 visit, became its driving force. He advocated developing visitor infrastructure, organizing foreign-language guides, and promoting Japanese culture, arguing that Japan needed to present itself abroad as effectively as France or the U.S..[66] By 1907, Japan formalized tourism development through laws. The Ministry of Railways actively promoted hotel construction to support and encourage travel via the railway network, and Japan had become a key travel hub

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[62] Hannah Shepherd: *'Strange Kaleidoscopic Scenes': Western Representations of Japanese Cities in Meiji, 1868-1912*. In: The Princeton Journal of East Asian Studies, Jun 2013. pp. 102-104.

[63] Andrew Elliott: *British Travel Writing and the Japanese Interior, 1854-1899*. In: The British Abroad Since the Eighteenth Century, Volume 1: Travellers and Tourists, ed. Martin Farr and Xavier Guégan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

[64] V. David Almazán Tomás: *Libros japoneses para turistas extranjeros (de la era Meiji a la II Guerra Mundial)*. In: Mirai. Estudios Japoneses 1, 2017., pp. 125 -127.

[65] The Welcome Society was considered more a tool of diplomacy than a source of economic gain. Its key goals were to support ryokan owners in upgrading their facilities, implement a system of travel guides, compile listings of attractions such as ruins, buildings, and parks, and provide accurate travel information and maps. The *Kihinkai* was funded by businesses benefiting from foreign tourists, but the 1906 railway nationalization sharply cut its resources and disrupted operations.

[66] Roger March: *How Japan Solicited the West: The First Hundred Years of Modern Japanese Tourism* (2007)., p 5.

and destination. In 1910, *The Times* of London called it "*the centre of the Orient in the field of the world's intercourse*" as all steamships between Hong Kong and the Americas stopped at Kobe and Yokohama.[67]

In the context of Japanese overseas travel, the development of the concepts of "nationality" and "citizenship" in Japan is an important topic to examine. The Confucian concept of the family provided the foundation for Japan's emerging understanding of nationality and citizenship, which was institutionalized through the koseki (戸籍), or household registration system. During the Meiji period, the state had to navigate the tension between the traditional Confucian family model, which had structured relationships between individuals and the Tokugawa state, and the emerging legal need to differentiate Japanese from non-Japanese. This convergence of family, law, and ethnicity defined nationality and citizenship in ways that effectively excluded women. In 1871, the Meiji government unified the registration system into a single *jinshin koseki* (壬申戸籍) to abolish feudal domains, centralize authority, and curtail the privileges of the samurai class. This reform rendered the state more "legible and controllable" while making *koseki* registration the primary basis for determining legal Japanese status until the Nationality Law of 1899. Although ideas of Japanese cultural identity had developed earlier through Confucian philological studies, the concept of nationality as a legal category only emerged with increased interaction with Europe and America. Yukichi Fukuzawa[68] provided one of the earliest legal references to nationality in his translation of John Stuart Mill, connecting citizenship to shared sympathies, patriotism, and collective identity. The *koseki* codified these relationships by documenting familial responsibilities and moral obligations alongside legal status, demonstrating the lasting influence of Confucian principles. The *koseki* system and the early Meiji constitutions were overtly patriarchal. Women were registered under their husband's household, with family names and property passing exclusively through the male line. Citizenship was regulated in cases of intermarriage, so that children of Japanese men were recognized as Japanese only if duly recorded in the *koseki*. As a result, legal membership in the nation was closely linked to both 'ethnicity' and male status, and the constitutions of the

[67] The Times, 1910, July 19.
[68] Japanese intellectual, educator, and writer who promoted Western learning, modernization, and individual rights during the Meiji period; he founded Keio University.

1880s relied on the *koseki* to define citizenship.[69] During the early Meiji period, the concept of *kokumin* (国民, literally "country-person", usually translated as "citizen") entered the popular vocabulary for the first time. In the late nineteenth century, Japanese intellectuals created and popularized neologisms to adapt Western concepts. Rather than using direct translations like *shiminken* (市民権, "citizenship") or *shimin* (市民, "citizen"), terms such as *kokumin* (国民), *minken* (民権, "people's rights"), and *kokuseki* (国籍, "nationality") were widely used in intellectual discussions. *Shiminken* mainly referred to Western notions of citizenship, while the preference for *country* over *city* reflected Japan's process of nation-building, in which citizenship rights emerged alongside the modern state without a prior civic society. In this process, the previous social hierarchy based on status groups was replaced by the concepts of *kokumin* (国民, "citizen") and *shinmin* (臣民, "subject").[70] With the emergence of the Meiji government in 1868, Japanese citizens were no longer prohibited from traveling abroad – a restriction that had been in place since 1635 under the shogunate, which treated leaving the country as a serious crime. The ban officially ended on 24 May 1866, allowing Japanese to go overseas for learning, trade, or scientific purposes. Following this reform, Japanese began traveling abroad, with Shanghai becoming a popular destination and hosting one of the earliest modern Japanese expatriate communities.[71] Controlling movement with documents was not new in Japan; it had been a key element of Tokugawa rule. Commoners traveling beyond their home domain needed a travel certificate (ōrai tegata, 往来手形), usually issued by village authorities, while samurai required a gate certificate (sekisho tegata, 関所手形) issued by their domain. These *tegata* primarily signaled official approval for travel and were not meant to verify identity – many, especially *sekisho tegata*, did not even list the traveler's name. The modern Japanese passport system, introduced in November 1866, was modeled on Western passports rather than *tegata*. Following the lifting of the overseas travel ban, officials informed foreign representatives that passports would be required for Japanese abroad and

[69] John Gavin Branstetter: *Translational Moments: Citizenship in Meiji Japan*. 2017. PhD Thesis UCLA, pp. 248-253.
[70] Eiko Ikegami: *Citizenship and National Identity in Early Meiji Japan, 1868-1889: A Comparative Assessment* In: International Review of Social History 40, Supplement 3 (1995), pp. 185-221. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859000113641
[71] Takahiro Yamamoto: *Japan's Passport System and the Opening of Borders 1866-1878* In: The Historical Journal, 60, 4 (2017), The University of Tokyo , p. 998.

requested examples from France and the United States. Japanese passports then incorporated descriptions of the bearer's physical characteristics (eyes, nose, mouth, etc.), a feature absent in Tokugawa-period *tegata*. When searching for accurate data on overseas travel from Japan in the late nineteenth century, one notices the limited information available, as many travelers left without passports and often visited multiple countries regardless of what was recorded on their documents. As a result, passport records available in Japan underestimate the true scale of cross-border movement, though they still provide a useful rough overview.[72] Akira Tezuka's data records about 4,200 Japanese people traveling between 1861 and 1912 for study or observation, with annual numbers generally in the low hundreds.[73] Data from official statistics and passport records suggest that non-student overseas travel in Japan was significant, though exact numbers are uncertain; statistics on students and officials capture only part of the overall picture.

The foreign ministry's statistics on Japanese passports issued by destination, 1868–1885

	1868–75	1876	1877	1888	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885
Korea	1,965	80	505	545	660	934	434	448	559	457	407
China	1,214	284	299	271	319	277	219	397	392	460	307
United States	596	128	35	57	37	48	55	60	59	284	312
Britain	225	28	32	47	25	16	15	26	15	83	250
Russia	90	100	71	62	50	122	306	247	246	106	118
Netherlands	3	0	0	0	0	10	0	4	4	0	5
France	96	14	40	66	12	18	12	24	21	32	11
Portugal	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
Germany	73	2	5	4	8	22	3	17	13	49	27
Italy	33	8	1	8	4	18	6	13	2	7	1
Spain	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Austria	106	1	1	1	0	8	3	8	1	2	5
Latin America	4	2	0	76	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Australia	3	0	9	3	0	7	2	0	41	6	21
Fiji	0	0	0	0	0	7	10	0	0	57	0
Various	218	62	3	0	18	23	2	23	19	3	23
India	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	3	1
Switzerland	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Turkey	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
Hawaii	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	1,959
Vietnam	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	2
Total	4,637	709	1,002	1,140	1,113	1,510	1,067	1,274	1,390	1,554	3,461

Source: Adopted from Gaimushō Tsushokyoku, ed., *Ryoken kafusū*, pp. 2–3.

After 1878, it was no longer possible to obtain a passport at a Japanese consulate abroad, though previously this had been allowed. The Meiji government recognized that most overseas travelers were commoners seeking economic opportunities rather than

[72] Takahiro Yamamoto: *Japan's Passport System and the Opening of Borders 1866-1878* In: The Historical Journal, 60, 4 (2017), The University of Tokyo , pp. 1001-1004.
[73] 手塚晃『幕末明治海外渡航者総覧』Tokyo, 柏書房, 1992, p. 7.

privileged students, and on 11 February 1871, it issued separate regulations for students traveling abroad. The Japanese government had limited control over cross-border travel, as many people left without documents, and border checks were minimal. By the late 1870s, the foreign ministry began facilitating travel, but Japan's first comprehensive passport law (20 February 1878) did not make passports mandatory; instead, it emphasized their usefulness abroad and focused on assisting short-haul travelers rather than strictly regulating movement. The main reason the Meiji government introduced the passport system and restricted large-scale labor migration was to align with Western customs and avoid being perceived as an exporter of cheap labor ("coolies"). Therefore, during the Meiji period, passports primarily served the state rather than travelers. Unlike European passports, which conferred privileges abroad, Japanese passports were essentially a tax on those leaving the country. In practice, the government's authority over travelers ended at Japan's borders; it did not offer protection abroad, and Japanese abroad faced local legal systems rather than Japanese consular courts, since Japan did not possess extraterritorial rights until the end of the nineteenth century. For Japanese travelers, their passport mainly functioned as official permission to leave Japan for a limited time, even though enforcement was generally lax. In summary, Japan's modern passport system primarily served the government's aim of controlling unwanted cross-border movement, thereby diverging from its original goal of emulating Western practices.[74] If we compare it with the Austro-Hungarian practice, both passport systems primarily served domestic administrative purposes – regulating emigration, particularly of commoners seeking economic opportunities.

Treaty ports, their surrounding areas, and Japan's designated zones for foreign travel were the agoras where foreign travelers, expatriates, and residents could engage not only with locals but also with fellow foreigners. Globetrotter travel in Japan favored convenience and security, with most staying close to these treaty ports. They usually landed in Yokohama, spending only a few days exploring the port and its surroundings. Brief excursions by rail or traditional transport such as jinrikisha and palanquins were

[74] Takahiro Yamamoto: *Japan's Passport System and the Opening of Borders 1866-1878* In: The Historical Journal, 60, 4 (2017), The University of Tokyo , pp. 1005-1015.

popular, but longer journeys relying on these modes were generally avoided. Longer trips to the Mt. Fuji area via Hakone were popular for the chance to stay in luxurious hot spring hotels. By the early 20th century, foreign residents in Japan favored Hakone, Miyanoshita, Kamakura, and Karuizawa as summer retreats, and Shuzenji on the Izu Peninsula as a winter destination. Miyanoshita was popular among Yokohama residents for weekend trips, while Karuizawa, reachable from Tokyo in six hours by train, offered relief from the summer heat. Hakone, located above Miyanoshita, was harder to access, with travel limited to walking, horseback, or yama-kago (a type of mountain palanquin or basket carried by porters).[75] Globetrotters favored destinations such as Nikko for its striking architecture, Osaka, Kyoto[76], and Nara via Kobe, and Nagasaki, where they often stayed briefly before continuing on to China. As noted above, foreign travel was regulated until 1899: following Japan's opening to international trade, foreigners were generally allowed to reside and conduct business only within designated treaty ports. Travel beyond these zones required official permission, and unauthorized excursions could provoke diplomatic tensions. While some foreign residents were able to journey elsewhere in Japan, such trips were subject to strict regulations, reflecting the government's cautious approach to controlling foreign presence and movement during the Meiji period.

The treaty ports' foreign communities shaped social interactions, where tensions often arose along lines of social status, country of origin, wealth, business or diplomatic interests, and other factors. In these spaces, *globetrotterism* and *insiderism* often clashed – two distinct approaches to being a foreigner in Japan. *Globetrotterism* mostly represented an idealistic perspective, characterized by short-term stays driven by curiosity and adventure. In contrast, *insiderism* embodied a more pragmatic, long-term approach, in which individuals who lived and worked in Japan for extended periods developed a rather critical understanding of Japan. For many globetrotters, Japan was just one stop on a world tour, often limited to colonies like India and China's treaty ports.

[75] Roger March: *How Japan Solicited the West: The First Hundred Years of Modern Japanese Tourism* (2007)., p 5.
[76] There is a fascinating project called *Modern Kyoto Research*, a digital humanities project examining how Kyoto's image as a traditional city was shaped through modern historical, cultural, and political processes. It includes references to Kyoto as a stage on the Globetrotters' route in Japan. https://www.modernkyotoresearch.org/home (accessed: 2026 June)

Diplomats and merchants similarly saw Japan as another posting in a career spanning strategic East Asian locations.

High Life and Lowdown in the Treaty Ports

During the mid-to-late 19th century, treaty ports emerged across Asia as tools for Western powers to penetrate and profit from new markets. As Darren L. Swanson notes, these ports embodied a distinctive system of social exclusion and exploitation within Western imperialism. We must add, however, that recent reassessments of the treaty port system have challenged the simplistic powerful/powerless dichotomy, arguing that the realities of the system were considerably more complex than this widely accepted binary implies. For instance, one study argues that the application of treaty privileges varied from one treaty port to another. Using Nagasaki as a case study, it contends that the city's small foreign community lacked the power to fully enforce the privileges granted under the Western treaty system. As a result, Japanese residents played the leading role in the city's modernization and development. The study presents Nagasaki as a transnational space where Western imperialism and Japan's rising imperial power interacted, challenging the traditional view of treaty ports as simply divided colonial enclaves.[77] As for everyday life in treaty ports such as Shanghai, Kobe, and Yokohama – the East Asian counterparts of cities such as New York, Paris, and London – it exhibited a comparable form of colonial decadence.[78]

One of the first tangible products of Western decadence in Japan was ice cream. Its introduction dates back to the late Edo period, when Japanese envoys visiting the U.S. were reportedly the first to taste it, marveling at its flavor. In 1869 (Meiji 2), Japan's first ice cream, called *aisukurin* (あいすくりん), was produced and sold in Yokohama by a Japanese merchant, who had studied abroad and was influenced by Western methods. Made with milk, eggs, and sugar, its production marked the beginning of ice cream culture in Japan. By the 1880s, ice cream had become a feature of elite social life,

[77] Jessa Kennedy Dahl: *"Singular in Many Respects": Transnational Landscapes and Colonial Power in Treaty Port Nagasaki, 1858–1905*. PhD Thesis, The University of Chicago, 2021.
[78] Darren L. Swanson: *Gentlemanly Capitalism and the Club*. In: ejcjs, Volume 12, Issue 1 (article 1 in 2012). First published in ejcjs on 1 May 2012. p. 20.

served at official receptions in the Rokumeikan, the Western-style government-built social hall, where foreign dignitaries were entertained with European-style balls, banquets, and desserts. Ice cream gradually spread to commercial venues: in 1875, Kaishindo Murakami in Tokyo began selling it, followed by other shops and hotels. By 1902, Shiseido Parlor in Ginza, modeled on American soda fountains, offered ice cream and ice cream sodas, quickly becoming a popular specialty. While initially expensive, costing 25 sen per serving, street vendors also sold it for just 1 sen, making it more accessible to the public. Shiseido's ice cream, flavored with egg yolk and lemon in a French style, soon became a famous treat in Ginza. Overall, the history of ice cream in Japan reflects the early Meiji enthusiasm for Western culture and modernization, evolving from a novelty for diplomats and elites to a popular treat in commercial and urban settings.[79] In the Meiji era, Yokohama, as a foreign enclave under extraterritoriality, embodied all things "Western", "modern", and "exotic"[80], while Tokyo retained much of its Edo-era character, with a mix of traditional culture and architecture. Ginza, however, emerged as the symbol of the new, modern Japan within Tokyo, with gaslights installed in 1874 and electric signs illuminating the boulevard by the 1880s. The lively nighttime crowds on gaslit promenades gave rise to a new custom known as '*Gimbura*' or the Ginza stroll, which became emblematic of the era. Even Western-style cafés began appearing around 1910. Yokohama and Ginza were closely connected by infrastructure: Ginza served as the terminus of the Yokohama railway, allowing foreign goods and fashions arriving in the harbor city to enter Tokyo almost exclusively through this district, linking Japan's window to the West with Tokyo's gateway to modernity.[81]

Darren L. Swanson notes that a treaty port was essentially an area governed by local sovereignty but subject to foreign extraterritorial rights, shaped by laissez-faire capitalism, and characterized by a spatial layout deeply influenced by these conditions.[82] Andreas Eichleter notes that divisions in the treaty ports appeared on multiple levels: between **merchants and diplomats/missionaries**, among **different**

[79] https://www.icecream.or.jp/iceworld/history/japan/ (accessed: 2025 Nov)
[80] Japan's first European restaurant managed by a Japanese person opened in Yokohama in 1867.
[81] Heiner Frühauf: *Urban Exoticism and Its Sino-Japanese Scenery, 1910–1923*. In: Asian and African Studies 6. 1997., pp. 149-155.
[82] Darren L. Swanson: *Gentlemanly Capitalism and the Club*. In: ejcjs, Volume 12, Issue 1 (article 1 in 2012). First published in ejcjs on 1 May 2012. p. 21.

Western/European nationalities, between **elite foreign residents and poor sailors or "loafers"**, along **racial lines (Westerners vs. Chinese and Japanese)**, by **gender (with women marginalized)**, across **individual ports** with their own rivalries and interests, and even **between competing newspapers**. These tensions surfaced frequently in the Treaty Port Press. Among them, the sharpest and most enduring conflict was between merchants and diplomats: merchants prioritized their own commercial gains and demanded strong enforcement of treaties, while diplomats represented broader national interests and resisted being treated as servants of the merchant community. This clash often spilled into the press and the courts, aggravated by merchants' misunderstandings of law under extraterritoriality.[83]

Merchants were important historical actors because they operated at the intersection of economic, political, and knowledge-producing networks, rather than being limited to trade alone. Their importance first came from their global mobility and embeddedness in colonial and overseas commercial systems: large numbers of European merchants lived and worked outside Europe, especially in Asia, where they developed long-term local experience and access to information that was unavailable to state officials or academics. This overseas experience made them valuable intermediaries when they returned home. In European commercial centers such as Hamburg or Bremen, they often became part of business elites and used their knowledge of foreign markets, languages, and institutions to shape trade policy and influence economic decision-making. Their expertise was institutionalized through associations like the German *Ostasiatische Verein*, which functioned not only as professional networks but also as lobbying organizations connecting commerce and state interests. At the same time, merchants were deeply involved in knowledge production. While abroad, they frequently acted as 'informal scientists' – collecting botanical, zoological, linguistic, or ethnographic materials, and observing local societies. This was not purely scientific curiosity: such knowledge could directly improve commercial advantage by enabling better navigation of markets, cultures, and resources. At home, their collections and observations fed into learned societies and

[83] Andreas Eichleter: *The Treaty Port Press and the Transformation of Yokohama From the Opening of the Treaty Port to the Beginning of Treaty Revision, 1859-1884*, PhD Thesis 2021, Heidelberg, pp. 66-67.; 273-276.

museums, contributing to the emergence of disciplines like ethnology. Institutions such as the German *Ostasien-Gesellschaft* show how heavily early scholarly research on Asia depended on merchant participation, since a large share of members were traders who supplied both material objects and field knowledge.[84]

"*Japan, the globetrotter's paradise, is also the grave of the merchant's hopes*"[85], wrote Basil Hall Chamberlain, referring to the gilded madhouse – or, to some, a graveyard – that Japan represented for profit-seekers, whether foreign or domestic. Competition among merchants often unfolded through creative forms of reciprocal backstabbing, whether foreign or domestic, regardless of formal power and legal structures, and this remained a kind of harsh reality-check feature of commercial life both before and after the abolition of extraterritoriality – something a simple globetrotter would not experience, or would experience only to a far lesser degree. It is therefore unsurprising that merchants experienced, initiated, and navigated many persistent tensions in the treaty ports. An example of the many frictions can be seen in Kobe around 1897, where foreigners were permitted to reside not only in the Foreign Settlement but also in the "Native Town", where they could rent property from Japanese landlords. While some initially opted for this arrangement on a temporary basis while awaiting housing in the Settlement, others intended longer-term residence. In practice, however, conditions in the Native Town were far less secure. Unlike the perpetual leases and extraterritorial protections available in the Foreign Settlement, rentals from Japanese landlords were typically limited to 20–25 years and lacked comparable legal safeguards. Landlords could raise rents, shorten lease terms, contest tenant improvements, or appropriate and resell buildings once leases expired. As landlord–tenant disputes fell under Japanese jurisdiction, they were adjudicated in Japanese courts, which many foreigners regarded as unfavorable, reinforcing perceptions of legal and commercial vulnerability in the Native Town.[86] Some interpersonal clashes were even elevated to a poetic register. An anonymous poem turned an Anglo-Saxon merchant's quarrel with a Japanese trader into verse at once

[84] https://franallglob.hypotheses.org/1987 (accessed: 2026 June)
[85] Basil Hall Chamberlain. *Japanese Things: Being Notes on Various Subjects Connected with Japan*. Charles E. Tuttles Co., 1904., p. 261.
[86] Prue S. Holstein: *The German Experience of Japan's Treaty Port System*. Routledge, 2026., p. 178.

witty and unsettling (in its not-so-thinly veiled yearning for violence). This blend of humor and menace captures the volatile undercurrent of daily life in the treaty ports.

> *"He gained the whole. I lost my all. I met the soulless wretch,*
> *And proved at least in words my wealth remained; and on a stretch.*
> *I hurled anathemas six hours; I could not give him blows*
> *The Consuls now forbid that course – though why, Heaven only knows.*"
> (Japan Weekly Mail, 13 December 1873, unknown contributor)

Britons were the second largest foreign community in the treaty ports after the Chinese. As noted by Darren Lee Swanson, the Japanese resented the foreign presence from the outset, driven both by the political ambitions of Euro-American powers and by the often condescending or abusive behavior of foreign residents. Many Western merchants, insecure in a foreign environment and with little knowledge of Japanese, treated lower-class locals as second-class citizens, sometimes using physical coercion. Acting in their own self-interest, they frequently disregarded diplomatic protocols and the guidance of consular officials, intensifying local hostility. In the treaty ports, relations were deeply unequal, with Japanese servants and employees often subjected to harsh or brutal treatment – especially by British residents – reflecting the hierarchical and colonial mindset that shaped daily interactions.[87] The treaty port press reflected this sentiment, often displaying negative attitudes and disregard toward Asian peoples and governments, though it occasionally offered favorable commentary – particularly on Japan from the late 1860s onward. Nevertheless, racial prejudices persisted throughout the treaty port period. This focus on attitudes was closely intertwined with the press's commercial orientation: newspapers largely prioritized commerce and politics, reflecting the influence of merchants, who formed a key part of the treaty port communities. (Eichleter emphasizes that the Japanese played a vital but often undervalued role in the treaty ports, with many Westerners viewing them as dishonest, corrupt, or untrustworthy, fueling tense relations. Chinese residents in Yokohama also played a similarly crucial role as intermediaries, clerks, managers, service workers, and merchants, yet their contributions were largely ignored in the Western press due to

[87] Darren Lee Swanson: *Treaty Port Society and the Club in Meiji Japan: Clubbism, Athleticism and the Public Sphere*, Phd Thesis, University of Sydney, 2016. http://hdl.handle.net/2123/16921

racial prejudices and segregation. Numerically, they were the largest foreign group in the port – rising from about 100 in 1864 to 660 by 1867 – and consistently made up roughly a third of all foreigners in Japan, forming a distinct Chinatown by the mid-1860s. Their success sometimes provoked European and American resentment, though from a Japanese perspective they were part of the foreign community.) Exceptions to the treaty port press's commercial orientation included missionary publications and satirical journals such as *Japan Punch*. One aspect of these newspapers is outstanding and unique: their remarkable independence. The Treaty Port Press operated with almost complete freedom from censorship,[88] protected by extraterritoriality and largely left alone by foreign diplomats. In Yokohama, especially, British-owned papers reflected Britain's strong press freedoms. Many newspapers did not hesitate to confront members of the treaty port community – merchants or officials alike – earning a reputation as 'equal opportunity offenders'.[89] Kristin Meißner provides an excellent historiographical overview of the foreign press in Meiji Japan, illustrating how newspapers spread Orientalist narratives while the Meiji government sought to counter them through strategic press interventions. During the Meiji period, the foreign press in Japan – particularly British-run newspapers such as *The Japan Mail*, *The Japan Herald*, and *The*

[88] Meiji-period censorship is often portrayed as a harsh, top-down system of state control, especially in the early years when publications required government permission and critical newspapers were banned. While it was more powerful than Tokugawa censorship, it also continued earlier practices by using post-publication review, which pushed publishers, editors, and authors to self-censor to avoid financial loss. As a result, censorship operated not only through the state but also through internal controls within the publishing world, much like in the Tokugawa era. From 1875, the Home Ministry took control of censorship, enforcing strict press and libel laws that made editors criminally responsible for what they published and allowed both new and old works to be banned through retrospective review. Heavy enforcement led newspapers to adopt evasive tactics such as using "prison editors" (in which people already imprisoned would append their names to editorials and take the blame for the content, while someone else handled the paper's day-to-day operations). New regulations in the 1880s and in 1887 further expanded state control and reintroduced pre-publication censorship, allowing the Home Ministry to punish anything seen as disturbing public order. Although the 1890 constitution promised freedom of expression, it was limited "within the law", meaning that the Home Ministry's unappealable censorship powers effectively overrode those freedoms. During the imperial period, censorship increasingly relied on informal, negotiated methods such as advance warnings, post-publication cautions, and required deletions or the use of *fuseji* (Xs or Os) inserted by publishers. This system continued practices from the Tokugawa era and shows that censorship worked not only through repression but also through cooperation between the state and the publishing world. Scholars argue this "complicity" was often a practical way to operate under censorship, as seen in kabuki theater, where artists and state reformers were closely interdependent and artists could even benefit from state support while accepting censorship rules. See: Rachael Hutchinson: *Censorship in the Japanese arts - Introduction.* In: Japan Forum 19 (3) 2007. pp. 272-274.

[89] Andreas Eichleter: *The Treaty Port Press and the Transformation of Yokohama From the Opening of the Treaty Port to the Beginning of Treaty Revision, 1859-1884*, PhD Thesis 2021, Heidelberg, pp. 68-69., 71-72., 130-131., 305.

Japan Gazette – served as powerful platforms for disseminating Orientalist and anti-Japanese narratives. Edited mainly by British merchants, these publications portrayed Japanese leaders as deceitful, incompetent, and barbaric, thus reinforcing the legitimacy of the unequal treaties and foreign control over tariffs and consular jurisdiction. In response, Shigenobu Ōkuma[90] sought to influence foreign reporting by subsidizing sympathetic newspapers, though early efforts, such as his agreement with *The Japan Mail*'s editor William G. Howell, failed to yield the desired results. In 1874, the American advisor Charles LeGendre, then employed by the Meiji government, proposed a more systematic solution – a government-sponsored English-language newspaper that would circulate both official factual reports and unofficial commentary appearing to be independent. Acting upon this suggestion, the Meiji government founded the *Tokyo Times* in 1876, appointing the American journalist and foreign employee Edward House as editor. House actively defended Japan's modernization policies and condemned Western imperial hypocrisy. When House returned to the U.S. in 1880, the British expert Francis Brinkley, formerly a professor at the Imperial College of Engineering, assumed the editorship of *The Japan Mail* and gradually transformed it into a pro-Japanese publication advocating treaty revision and criticizing Western obstructionism. Beyond House and Brinkley, several other foreign experts contributed to this broader press diplomacy. Aware that treaty revision depended heavily on Western perceptions of Japan's "modernity", Meiji officials encouraged foreign employees to publish works highlighting Japan's progress in adopting Western institutions and values. Through these efforts, Western experts helped the Japanese government challenge Orientalist stereotypes, promote Japan's image as a modern nation, and shape global public opinion in favor of revising the unequal treaties.[91]

When we look at the treaty port population, various statistics reveal both similarities and differences between ports. In 1870, Hyogo and Osaka were dominated by British residents (112), followed by Americans (38), North Germans (40), French (27), and Dutch (26), with smaller numbers of Austro-Hungarians (10), Portuguese (5),

[90] Japanese statesman, educator, and reformer who served twice as Prime Minister and played a key role in Japan's modernization and treaty revision efforts during the Meiji era

[91] Kristin Meißner: *Responsivity within the Context of Informal Imperialism: Oyatoi in Meiji Japan*. In: Journal of Modern European History · January 2016. pp. 279-284.

Spaniards (6), Swedes (4), Danes (2), and Italians (1). Nagasaki showed a similar pattern, with British (88), Americans (26), North Germans (22), French (13), and Dutch (14) forming the largest groups, alongside a notable Portuguese presence (19) and smaller numbers of Austro-Hungarians (2), Belgians (1), Swedes (2), Russians (1), Norwegians (2), and Danes (2).[92] Sojourning or visiting sailors were excluded from calculations of permanent residents, yet they significantly increased the foreign population in Yokohama. British ships alone brought an average of 10,000 sailors annually, many of whom came from diverse international origins. Some stayed for extended periods between voyages, but as a transient, lower-class population, they were rarely acknowledged in the foreign press and often portrayed as troublesome, a reputation confirmed by their high involvement in court cases in the treaty ports.[93] As for globetrotters, a Hungarian article – citing the *Journal des Débats* – reports that in 1902, 13,709 globetrotters visited Japan, and this number had risen to 16,530 by 1905. Contemporary statistics also record their annual expenditures in Japan, estimated at between 15,000,000 and 18,000,000 yen.[94] To place these figures in a broader context of foreign presence in Japan, Eichleter provides the following table[95] on the foreign population of Yokohama between 1868 and 1880:

The Foreign Population of Yokohama 1868-1880

Year	British	American	French	German	Dutch	Other	Chinese	Total
1868	200	95	90	66	37	69	*No data*	557
1874	545	*No data*	146	173	65	192	1,290	2,411
1875	620	*No data*	127	150	78	175	1,192	2,342
1876	635	240	161	160	86	239	1,033	2,554
1877	570	189	131	160	71	238	1,142	2,501
1878	515	300	120	175	59	201	1,850	3,220
1880	567	250	102	200	51	206	2,505	3,881

[92] Japan Weekly Mail, 20 May 1871, 3 June 1871
[93] Andreas Eichleter: *The Treaty Port Press and the Transformation of Yokohama From the Opening of the Treaty Port to the Beginning of Treaty Revision, 1859-1884*, PhD Thesis 2021, Heidelberg, p. 128.
[94] Budapesti Hírlap, 1906-09-15 / 253. szám.
[95] Andreas Eichleter: *The Treaty Port Press and the Transformation of Yokohama From the Opening of the Treaty Port to the Beginning of Treaty Revision, 1859-1884*, PhD Thesis 2021, Heidelberg, p. 218.

Despite the existence of small Jewish communities in treaty ports such as Yokohama, Kobe, and Nagasaki from the late nineteenth century onward, their history has received relatively limited scholarly attention. We can gain a glimpse into their lives through Szigfrid Komor, a Hungarian Jew who was a resident of Yokohama:

> *"In Yokohama, where I lived for about 20 years, there are about 80 well-to-do Jews. We had no synagogue, nor did we form a congregation, and yet we all knew who among us was Jewish. If we consider that the Jewish community in Yokohama was perhaps a melting pot of Jews from every country in the world, there could not have been a closer bond among us than this, and yet, despite that, we were all always ready to generously and thoughtfully care for our Jewish brethren in need – then a certain pride can take hold of us in the knowledge that the ancient willingness to do charity and the sublime sense of solidarity have not yet died out among the Jewish people. Although we are convinced that our fellow Jews living in Yokohama are of good Jewish spirit, there is not a single one among them who can demonstrate sufficient proficiency in ritual matters. On this occasion, I think with reverence of the good old Witkovszky, of Polish origin, the only one who previously performed these duties with the greatest expertise in Yokohama. His kind presence was never absent from weddings, funerals, or births; he always appeared faithfully to perform the ceremonies prescribed by our religion and to recite the required prayers with deep and sincere devotion. (...) In Yokohama, we were so short of people qualified to perform ritual duties that the ritual circumcision had to be performed by an elderly Irish Catholic doctor. (...) I tried in vain to persuade myself and my fellow believers to build a church; I couldn't even manage to hire a single prayer leader, because they always countered with the question: "Who has time to go to church?" Unfortunately, I must admit that in some respects they were right. The hectic pace of business and commerce would hardly have allowed us to go to synagogue at any time other than on Sundays. Yet we all observed the major holidays nonetheless. The shops remained closed, and the prayer books were open. Of the three port cities mentioned, only Nagasaki has a separate Jewish cemetery, while Yokohama and Kobe do have designated burial plots, but these are located within the Christian*

cemetery and are not separated from the other graves by either a wall or a fence. (...) The family and social life of Jews who have immigrated to China and Japan can be described as quite pleasant and conforms to the good customs that are generally prevalent there. Even the less affluent class, which is engaged in distilling brandy and running taverns, lives in considerable prosperity. These people are very close-knit among themselves and never turn their backs on their brothers and sisters should misfortune ever befall them. Their family life is very beautiful; they provide their children with a good upbringing and sacrifice a great deal for this purpose. (...) They usually marry off their daughters in Shanghai, where they find wealthy husbands. Most European girls marry Arab Jews, who are exemplary husbands and outstanding fathers. The more prominent Jews, who, as I have already mentioned, are usually merchants, live at least as well – and perhaps even better – than they would in Europe. Social interaction is cultured, relaxed, and pleasant, and their lifestyle is by no means frugal. Each has his own house, garden, and adequate household staff."[96]

Foreign employees (御雇い外国人) also formed part of the treaty port population. Although treaty port merchants criticized these experts for being pro-Japanese and allegedly unpatriotic, diplomats valued their reputation because it helped build trust with Meiji officials. During the Meiji period, Japan employed about 3,000-4,000 Western advisors in both government and private sectors to modernize every aspect of society, including law, the military, and industry. Legal experts were especially important, helping Japan master international law and serving as colonial consultants. Japan sought parity with Western powers by sending students abroad, building elite networks, and employing foreign experts, whose knowledge and authority became valuable political assets. These 'transimperial experts' showed varying loyalties to their host empires, ranging from devoted 'converts' to those advancing their home country's interests. Most balanced these loyalties and sometimes acted as intermediaries. They were granted differing levels of autonomy – some held formal government posts, while others were purely advisors. Japan, while paying well, carefully structured contracts to ensure

[96] Egyenlőség, 1905-01-22

advisors remained strictly in advisory roles and to protect its sovereignty.[97] During the Bakumatsu period, most foreigners employed by the *bakufu* and *han* served in official naval, military, or technological missions. From 1868 to around 1873, many were incompetent "ikasama",[98] often already in Japan seeking work, which led to wasted salaries, while those hired from abroad were more carefully selected. Foreign employees were strictly prohibited from engaging in commerce, as this threatened Japanese control over customs and trade, a loophole exploited by foreign powers. The Meiji government strictly controlled them, requiring obedience to their Japanese supervisors. Contracts became more rigorous and qualifications were carefully vetted to prevent amateurs from exploiting positions or sharing sensitive knowledge. Although foreign employees were permitted to travel within Japan for work, their expertise – particularly engineers overseeing construction projects – was closely monitored, since their knowledge could otherwise give Western powers a commercial advantage during Japan's modernization. Therefore, Japanese officials maintained a high level of distrust toward them. Yet, the Japanese government could only dismiss them for misconduct, since legal cases fell under consular courts. In February 1870, Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs introduced the *Instructions for Hiring Foreigners*, setting formal guidelines for employing foreign specialists. Hazel J. Jones argues that from the early Meiji period, a core group of Japanese officials combined critical judgment of foreigners with an acknowledgment of the necessity of their expertise. He convincingly shows that shrewd maneuvering between the Japanese government as employer and foreign experts as employees at the treaty ports was part of the game, sometimes playing a pivotal role. The Japanese government sometimes used foreign employment strategically, as in the case of British journalist John Reddie Black, whose appointment was designed to remove him from his editorial role, culminating in a regulation barring foreigners from running Japanese-language newspapers. Western employees, however, protected themselves through careful contracts, often in multiple languages, ensuring compensation and legal recognition in disputes. Foreign employment in Japan

[97] John L. Hennessey: *Preacher, trader, soldier, spy: Studying transimperial individuals through their occupational roles.* In: Schär, Bernhard C. and Mikko Toivanen (eds.): *Integration and Collaborative Imperialism in Modern Europe: At the Margins of Empire, 1800-1950*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024., pp. 26-27.
[98] Ikasama (イカサマ) means cheating, fraud, or trickery. It can be used to describe foul play, such as in a card game, or a scam.

reached its peak in 1874–75, exceeding 800 workers annually, before dropping to 500–600 in 1877–78 and stabilizing around 200 per year through the 1880s,[99] with a slight decline by 1892. In 1877, the Foreign Ministry streamlined its procedures, no longer requiring draft contracts for approval and only mandating the reporting of basic employee details – such as name, position, salary, address, and contract status – when hiring or dismissing foreigners.[100] Kristin Meißner argues that Western powers expanded their influence in Japan by employing foreign experts, whose technical skills and social capital – their ability to build trust – served as key political assets. At the same time, Japanese officials leveraged these same experts to counter Western informal-imperial tactics, using their authority and reputation to promote Japanese perspectives globally and challenge Orientalist prejudices in treaty negotiations.[101] Kristin Meißner estimates that only about 20% of all foreign employees were true experts. Highly skilled professionals – mainly from Britain, the U.S., France, and Germany – served as university professors, technical instructors, and advisers, forming an auxiliary elite that accelerated Meiji reforms. They were recruited through diplomats, universities, and agents, offered lucrative contracts (two to three times their home pay), and typically served three-year terms, often extended to five years or more, with some remaining for decades.[102]

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[99] Kristin Meißner explains this drop in numbers by noting that, by the 1880s, reliance on foreign personnel decreased as trained Japanese staff took over, Japanese leaders acted more independently within global networks, and rising Western competition made foreign-driven trade imperialism harder to sustain. Kristin Meißner: *Responsivity within the Context of Informal Imperialism: Oyatoi in Meiji Japan*. In: Journal of Modern European History · January 2016. p. 272-273.

[100] Hazel J. Jones: *The Formulation of the Meiji Government Policy Toward the Employment of Foreigners*. In: Monumenta Nipponica, Vol. 23, No. 1/2 (1968), pp. 11-27.

[101] For example: noting that Britain blocked treaty revisions to protect its trade, Japan aligned more with Germany, which sought to expand its technology presence and offered treaty support. At the same time, intensified competition and Japan's growing autonomy forced Western diplomats to conceal their imperial ambitions and partly abandon cooperation with other treaty powers, often discrediting rivals by accusing them of illicit strategies. British and German diplomats leveraged the dual role of foreign experts in Japan: to secure commercial contracts and provide crucial intelligence, while their reputation as apolitical professionals helped conceal these unofficial influences. Meiji officials recognized Western powers' self-interest and exploited their commercial rivalries, understanding that international competition outweighed genuine cooperation despite the powers' official claims of a shared civilizing mission. Meiji officials, drawing on Japan's experience in the Sino-centric world system, skillfully balanced appearances of acknowledging foreign supremacy with asserting Japan's full sovereignty. Kristin Meißner: *Responsivity within the Context of Informal Imperialism: Oyatoi in Meiji Japan*. In: Journal of Modern European History · January 2016. p. 273-278.

[102] Kristin Meißner: *Responsivity within the Context of Informal Imperialism: Oyatoi in Meiji Japan*. In: Journal of Modern European History · January 2016. pp. 270-273.

Regarding gender differences in the treaty ports, there was a gradual increase in female foreigners, reflecting the steady rise in the number of women visiting Japan – from a few in the 1860s–70s to a continuous stream of tourists, missionaries, educators, and travelers by the early 20th century. Nevertheless, the treaty ports – especially Yokohama – remained overwhelmingly male, leading many Western men to enter '*temporary marriages*', '*Japanese marriages*', '*treaty port marriages*', or '*term marriages*', in which Japanese women provided companionship, *sexual services*, and household management. Such arrangements, along with the presence of red-light districts, fueled criticism of the moral reputation of the treaty ports. Over time, especially in later decades, Western-Japanese relationships became more common and formalized, while early on, class distinctions meant that only lower-status men – sailors and soldiers – were implied to frequent *tea houses*[103] and places like Yoshiwara (a red-light district in Tokyo), in contrast to more "respectable" foreigners. (By the 1890s, the practice appeared to be nearly universal among unmarried merchants).[104] We can grasp details about the temporary marriage market from a report from 1867 (though it should be noted that foreign men who entered into temporary marriages rarely disclosed their experiences, as such arrangements were socially disapproved of in their home countries):

> "*At one time the license for keeping a prostitute as a mistress at Yokohama reached 24 bu or about £1.60p a month. This sum was paid to the brothel authorities of the place. The entire amount paid for a month's service by a foreigner at Yokohama amounted from twenty-five to thirty dollars a month. The established charge is higher at Yokohama than at Nagasaki. It is computed that there are about one thousand prostitutes at Yokohama, of which number between two and three hundred are employed as mistresses of foreigners, with*

[103] Traditionally, a chaya (茶屋, 'tea house') was a place where travelers or townspeople could rest, drink tea, and enjoy light refreshments. Over time, the term was also applied to establishments that provided entertainment, including music, dance, and on occasion, sexual services. Consequently, chaya was sometimes used in Japan as a euphemism for brothel, probably because certain brothels incorporated the suffix into their names, making them difficult to distinguish from genuine tea houses.

[104] Andreas Eichleter: *The Treaty Port Press and the Transformation of Yokohama From the Opening of the Treaty Port to the Beginning of Treaty Revision, 1859-1884*, PhD Thesis 2021, Heidelberg, p. 129.; Arthur Groos: *Madama Butterfly/Madamu Batafurai: Transpositions of a "Japanese Tragedy"*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. p. 9.

an average wage, at the present time, of fifteen to twenty dollars a month each."[105]

Attila Szemere, a Hungarian traveler, had a 'Japanese wife', *Toyo san*, during his time in Japan. In a candid letter to a friend, he wrote the following in 1883:

"*(...) there is no country in the world as beautiful as Japan (Hungary should always be excluded from such statements). The countryside is beautiful, the people are interesting and kind, the art is magnificent, and the women are beautiful and gracious. (If you say to someone, "watakushi sukibi anada", which means "I want to fuck you" in Hungarian, there is a 70:100 chance that your request will be granted.) Most Europeans here live in so-called Japanese marriages. A man takes on a neat young lady for $10-20 a month, and as long as you like her, she will be a more faithful and kinder wife than a European spouse bound by an unbreakable bond. She will not cheat on you, ruin you, or leave you, as our European ladies tend to do.*"[106]

Allen Hockley poses an important question about the relationship between Western men and Japanese women: why were 19th-century Western globetrotters so fascinated by Japanese women, and how did this fascination reflect broader cultural dynamics? Unlike in many other Asian or Middle Eastern societies, Japanese women were relatively *visible and accessible* to foreigners, offering foreign travelers and residents a glimpse into domestic life rarely available elsewhere. Westerners were struck by Japanese women's apparent freedoms and by the importance of motherhood and childrearing in Japanese society, which they compared to changing Western attitudes toward childhood. Male travelers often idealized Japanese women as gentle, submissive, and eternally 'girl-like', projecting fantasies of innocence and domesticity. Ultimately, globetrotters' portrayals of Japanese women – through descriptions of kimono, behavior, and sexuality – turned them into icons of Japan itself.[107] In

[105] Hugh Cortazzi: *Dr Willis in Japan (1862–1877): British Medical Pioneer*. London and Dover, AthlonePress, 1985, pp. 142-43.

[106] Attila Szemere to Zoltán Ambrus, Yokohama (Japan) June 5, 1883. Source: OSZK Fond 471. Translated by the Author.

[107] The shaping of Japanese women's appearance was part of the Westernisation agenda of the Japanese government; however, the traditional identity associated with wearing the kimono was not erased but rather reinforced. As a result, women played a key role in preserving and idealising the kimono. Women dressed in kimono came to symbolise refinement, tradition, and continuity, positioning women as guardians of pre-Meiji values and helping to ease social anxieties during a period of rapid change. In the early phase of Japan's industrialisation, cotton fabric

19th-century Japan, public nudity – such as women working bare-chested in summer or communal bathing – was common and often noted by travelers. In addition to these, in early Meiji Japan there was a peculiarly frivolous performance in the pleasure quarters catering to foreigners: the *Chonkina* dance. Accompanied by shamisen music, it featured a song with lyrics such as "*Chon kina, chon kina, chon chon kina kina …*". Its popularity was closely tied to foreigners in the treaty ports, making it a part of local entertainment culture. The term "*Chonkina*" may itself be a pun: *chon* possibly alluding to *chō* or *ochō* (courtesan), and *kina* meaning "*come here*". While some sources claim it originated in Nagasaki, others link it to the pleasure quarters of Yokohama. Chonkina was essentially an erotic strip-game dance.[108] It involved a *rock-paper-scissors*-type gesture contest, during which the loser removed an article of clothing, turning the dance into a progressive strip performance. Contemporary accounts describe prostitutes performing it for foreign patrons, accompanied by shamisen. A Hungarian traveler wrote about a similar performance he witnessed in a teahouse:

> "*The singing performances that can be seen in tea houses are of interest to the European man. I myself have witnessed such a performance. Two women with harps entered the room, one of whom was strikingly beautiful and had her teeth painted black as a sign that she was already married and had thus renounced her desire for beauty. When the singing and harp music began, the musumes*[109]

remained too expensive for most people, who continued to rely on rural cottage textile production. During the first 20 years of the Meiji period, new technologies significantly transformed silk production and kimono design. Aniline dyes from Germany, Jacquard looms from France, Western spinning machines, and European technical literature were introduced with government support. While traditional centres in Kyoto adopted these technologies but struggled to adapt to bright chemical dyes and new aesthetics, Tokyo-based designers embraced mechanisation and experimentation, producing innovative kimono designs that reinterpreted tradition through modern industrial techniques. See: Manuel Schilcher: *Inventing the Kimono - Ways the West created a Japanese tradition.* Atelier Furusato, pp. 6-7. http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16507.94248

[108] See: Sepp Linhart: *Unbekannte Geschichte(n) Japans - Sozialhistorische und interkulturelle Betrachtungen 1841–1912*. Mandelbaum Verlag, 2025.

[109] In the 1860s, the term *mousmé* was commonly used within the foreign enclave of Yokohama. Although many believe it entered French through Pierre Loti's popular 1887 novel *Madame Chrysanthème*, Jessica Uldry demonstrated that the word had already appeared in 1870 in *Le Japon illustré*, written by Aimé Humbert, a Swiss politician, diplomat, and Minister of Switzerland to Japan during the early Meiji period. The term derives from the Japanese word musume (娘), meaning "young girl" in a filial or daughterly sense. In French, however, *mousmé* shed this parental nuance and took on a slightly exotic, gallant tone. Humbert described *mousmés* as young women employed by foreign residents as domestic servants. Their position was ambiguous: although treated with a respectful decorum similar to that accorded to married women, they were also vulnerable to becoming involved in sexual relationships with their Western employers. Humbert frames these cases of private prostitution as largely the responsibility of the foreign men, while also noting that some *mousmés* might use emotional or intimate ties to improve their own or their families' economic situation. Jessica Uldry: *Echoes of Slavery: An Analysis of Aimé*

sat down next to each other in a circle, clapped their hands and waved to each other, which lasted quite a long time; until finally one of them took off her scarf, and the others followed suit, until slowly, having thrown off all their clothes, they ran out of the room in their paradisiacal robes. As interesting as the description of the tea houses and the life that goes on in them may be, I cannot dwell on this subject for long, because I would run out of material due to my relatively short experience."[110]

The performance had a scandalous reputation even in its own time. Cultural critics in Meiji Japan condemned it as unseemly and associated it with alcohol, prostitution, and the perceived moral decline of port-city nightlife. By around 1891, the practice had largely disappeared. However, Chonkina continued to surface in Western works – such as operettas – demonstrating how it became part of the *Japonisme* narrative, an eroticized form of 'otherness' that fascinated Western audiences.

Western women, like their male counterparts, admired the charm and sensuality of Japanese women. Yet, their encounters with local women were brief, and they identified more with Western culture than with shared womanhood. As a result, they rarely critiqued portrayals of Japanese women and sometimes found their sensuality as captivating as male travelers did. The Western fascination with Japanese women naturally extended to the world of the geisha, a profession that had often doubled as a front for prostitution since the mid-18th century, a practice that persisted during the globetrotter era. In the male-dominated treaty ports, Western men "elevated" their temporary mistresses to the status of "geisha" to enhance their own prestige. As a result, globetrotters came to associate the term "geisha" with sexual availability, reinforcing the broader sexualization of Japanese women.[111] In the Tokugawa era, geisha were diverse entertainers often linked to brothels, making them hard to distinguish from prostitutes. During the Meiji period, pressures to conform to Western norms led intellectuals and reformers to view geisha as a threat to Japan's reputation, prompting efforts to redefine their social image. In the 1870s, some geisha rebranded

Humbert's Depiction of Courtesans in Le Japon Illustré (1870) and His Artistic Approach. In: Halina Zawiszová and Martin Lavička (eds.): *Voiced and Voiceless in Asia.* Palacký University Olomouc, 2023., pp. 314-318.

[110] Bernáth Géza: *Keletázsiai utazás*. 1873., p. 177.

[111] *Globetrotters' Japan: Places*. developed by Visualizing Cultures at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and presented on MIT OpenCourseWare. https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/gt_japan_people/ (accessed: 2025 Nov)

themselves as “enlightened” or progressive, aligning with the ideals of civilization and modernization to gain publicity and separate themselves from lower-class prostitutes. Broader attempts by sex trade proprietors framed geisha as morally productive, echoing later Meiji ideals of “good wives and wise mothers”. Public health concerns also influenced policy, with some geisha subjected to medical exams, though less rigorously than licensed prostitutes.[112] In 1872, responding to international pressure, the Meiji government issued the “*Emancipation Edict for Female Performers and Prostitutes*”. This decree freed prostitutes from debt bondage but did not end prostitution. Instead, it created a new licensed system in which brothels operated as “*rental parlors*” and sex workers, officially deemed to act of their own free will, required police-issued licenses to work in designated areas.[113] Temporary marriages in Japan gradually declined from the 1890s (the practice never had a formal legal status). In Yokohama, the growing demand from naval officers and foreign merchants for temporary companions put pressure on the brothel system and its regulations. Women were often contracted on a monthly basis – sometimes through negotiations with an official at the customs house – to clients living in the foreign concession. Despite official bans on relationships between foreigners and non-prostitutes, the freelance recruitment of young girls continued to spread, with only sporadic government efforts to curb it.[114] Nevertheless, a surprising number of young women, mostly from poor families, were employed in open port cities and temporarily married off to foreigners. There were ideological motives as well: the women chosen for this role were expected to sacrifice themselves, acting as a kind of advance guard to protect the “virtue of their compatriots” from the “Western barbarians”. In colloquial language, they were referred to simply as rashamen (羅紗綿). The word is said to have Portuguese origins, with *raxa* (pronounced: ‘*rasha*’) meaning a kind of thick, felt-like, woolen material. Such a fabric did not exist in Japan and was seen only occasionally among foreigners. Over time, the word shifted in meaning, until it came to refer to foreigners themselves. Furthermore, it was once believed in Japan that

[112] Amy Stanley: *Enlightenment Geisha: The Sex Trade, Education, and Feminine Ideals in Early Meiji Japan*. In: The Journal of Asian Studies 72(3), 2013. pp. 541–544. DOI: 10.1017/S0021911813000570.
[113] Arthur Groos: *Madama Butterfly/Madamu Batafurai: Transpositions of a “Japanese Tragedy”*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. p. 4.
[114] Arthur Groos: *Madama Butterfly/Madamu Batafurai: Transpositions of a “Japanese Tragedy”*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. p. 3.

Westerners brought sheep on their ships to satisfy their sexual urges during long voyages. As a result, the term *rashamen* (洋妾) eventually became a nickname for the temporary local Japanese "wives" of foreigners in the early Meiji period. Some of these women became well known, while others tragically resorted to suicide.[115] Darren Lee Swanson points out that in the treaty ports, single foreign men often formed relationships with Japanese women that benefited both the wife's family economically and the foreign merchant, providing him with valuable business connections. Many of these unions were essentially sham marriages arranged for business purposes, including cases in which foreigners registered property in their wives' names to bypass restrictions on foreign land ownership. Formal marriages under British law, by contrast, required wives to become British citizens, effectively confining them to the foreign settlement. Such arrangements were part of a broader social practice, exemplified by the "Butterfly Game" in which Japanese go-betweens matched foreigners with young brides, a system that later inspired Puccini's *Madama Butterfly.* Mixed relationships were also common among transient populations, including soldiers, many of whom maintained 'comfortable arrangements' with Japanese women, so that in 1875 Japanese mothers could be seen lining the streets with children fathered by British and French soldiers.[116] Notably, some of the earliest mixed marriages involved British women and Japanese men who had studied in Britain, illustrating that these unions

[115] Karen Kelsky: *Women on the verge: Japanese women Western dreams*. Duke University Press, 2001., p. 35. There is an interesting essay on this topic, which provides detailed information about the lives of the rashamen working in the Russian settlement near Nagasaki: 中條直樹、宮崎千穂『ロシア人士官と稲佐のラシャメンとの"結婚"生活について』, 名古屋大学言語文化論集 23(1) pp. 109-130. There is a moving song about a specific rashamen, compiled by the band サザンオールスターズ, titled Tōjin Monogatari (唐人物語) or Rashamen no Uta（ラシャメンのうた）, from the album 綺麗 (1984). The song narrates the tragic life of Kichi Saitō (斎藤きち), a 19th-century Japanese woman who was the first Japanese woman to serve a foreigner and later became a concubine to a foreign diplomat; in subsequent years, she was nicknamed Tōjin O-Kichi (唐人お吉). The lyrics explore themes of cross-cultural encounters, sorrow, and resilience, and the song is praised for its emotional depth and historical storytelling. (It should be noted that most of the story of Tōjin O-Kichi, especially her alleged role as Townsend Harris's concubine, is speculative. While she was officially sent as a nurse, Harris was unmarried and devout, making a sexual relationship unlikely. The popular tragic image originates largely from the 1928 novel by Yoshisaburō Jūichiya, which blended fact and fiction.)

[116] From 1873 onward, mixed-race children faced difficulties because Japanese law assigned them their father's nationality and excluded them from Japanese citizenship. Eurasian orphans were not openly discussed in the West, as attention focused on missionary achievements such as evangelization, hospitals, and schools. Behind the scenes, however, missionary women played a role in reform efforts of the late 1880s, establishing rescue homes, orphanages, and schools for Eurasian children. See: Gary P. Leupp: *Interracial Intimacy in Japan: Western Men and Japanese Women, 1543-1900.*, A&C Black, 2003. pp.196-197, 204-211.; Arthur Groos: *Madama Butterfly/Madamu Batafurai: Transpositions of a "Japanese Tragedy"*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. p. 10.

could transcend expected cultural and social boundaries.[117] Between 1873 and 1897, a total of 230 international marriages were recorded in Japan. Of these, 77 involved English nationals, with 65 men and 12 women; among them were 2 Indian men, 2 Singaporean men, 1 Jamaican man, 1 Maltese man, and 1 Australian woman. (These individuals were recorded under Great Britain because their regions were British colonies at the time, and their residents were legally considered British subjects.) Chinese men accounted for 57 marriages, while Germans were involved in 32, comprising 14 men and 18 women, including 1 woman from the Marshall Islands. Americans participated in 25 marriages, with 13 men and 12 women, and the French in 15, with 10 men and 5 women. Russians and Dutch each had 5 marriages, all men, while Portugal and Denmark had 3 marriages each, all men. Belgium recorded 2 marriages, 1 man and 1 woman; Spain, including the Philippines – which was under Spanish rule at the time – accounted for 2 marriages, both women; and Austria-Hungary had 1 marriage, a man. Overall, most foreign spouses were men, although some nationalities, such as Germans, included more women than men. (Germany stands out for having slightly more marriages between Japanese men and foreign women, likely because it was a popular destination for Japanese students sent abroad under government programs.)[118] Most international marriages involved Japanese women marrying foreign men, while Japanese men less frequently married foreign women, which is understandable since between 1876 and 1883, approximately 85% of foreigners in Japan were male. The majority of these Japanese wives were initially employed by foreigners as *mekake* (妾／目掛け), a term referring to women who served as companions or concubines, often in a semi-formal domestic or sexual arrangement. Many later became pregnant and subsequently married their foreign employers.[119]

With regard to life in the treaty ports, the most significant research is that of Darren Lee Swanson, whom I mentioned earlier. His PhD thesis, *Treaty Port Society and the Club in Meiji Japan: Clubbism, Athleticism and the Public Sphere*, is the most valuable source for understanding treaty port life in depth.[120] The thesis argues that

[117] Darren Lee Swanson: *Treaty Port Society and the Club in Meiji Japan: Clubbism, Athleticism and the Public Sphere*, Phd Thesis, University of Sydney, 2016. pp. 153. 156-157. http://hdl.handle.net/2123/16921
[118] 小山騰「明治前期国際結婚の研究・国籍事項を中心に」In: 近代日本研究　VOL11. 1994., p. 156.
[119] 小山騰「明治前期国際結婚の研究・国籍事項を中心に」In: 近代日本研究　VOL11. 1994., p. 159.
[120] Darren Lee Swanson: *Treaty Port Society and the Club in Meiji Japan: Clubbism, Athleticism and the Public*

although the Japanese treaty ports were smaller than those in Shanghai or Hong Kong, they nevertheless served as crucial gateways into the country. Formally under Japanese sovereignty, they were in practice administered through Euro-American jurisdiction. Initially occupied by temporary traders, the ports gradually gave rise to more permanent expatriate communities that reproduced European cultural and social norms, forming what scholars describe as a "colonial public sphere". This is reflected in a tradition whereby Westerners often applied familiar names and labels from other treaty ports to Japanese places: Yokohama, for example, acquired its own "Bund", echoing the famous waterfront district of Shanghai.[121] The term *Bund* derived from the Hindi बांध *(baandh)*, meaning embankment, became a defining feature of treaty ports. It was one of several colonial-era loanwords from the Indian subcontinent, including टिफ़िन (ṭifin), referring to a light meal or snack; चिट (ciṭ), meaning a small note or receipt. These words reflect the linguistic and cultural influence of colonial interactions.[122]

Within these enclaves, clubs quickly emerged as the focal point of community life. By the early twentieth century, they had become indispensable institutions of treaty port society. These clubs distinguished elites from outsiders and reinforced prevailing class and racial hierarchies, though they could also foster cooperation and a limited sense of solidarity. For many expatriates, they provided a psychological refuge from the perceived "otherness" of Japan, helping to preserve a stable sense of identity in a foreign setting. In their early years, the settlements developed a reputation as unruly frontier towns, marked by disorder and vice. With time, clubs grew more structured but also increasingly exclusive and insular. In retrospect, it is clear that clubs in Japanese treaty ports emerged primarily in response to social stratification and safety concerns. The elite created exclusive spaces to reinforce class boundaries, maintain a sense of moral superiority, and ensure security. Swanson notes that foreign residents were generally looked down upon if they were seen to have "gone native", as living far from

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Sphere, Phd Thesis, University of Sydney, 2016. http://hdl.handle.net/2123/16921; At this point, the author of this book should pause to note that, in his 20 years of research, he has never read a more engaging, educational, accessible, and academically valuable piece of scholarship – and he tips his hat to Swanson for this invaluable contribution.

[121] Hannah Shepherd: *'Strange Kaleidoscopic Scenes': Western Representations of Japanese Cities in Meiji, 1868-1912.* In: The Princeton Journal of East Asian Studies, Jun 2013. p. 103.

[122] Darren Lee Swanson: *Treaty Port Society and the Club in Meiji Japan: Clubbism, Athleticism and the Public Sphere*, Phd Thesis, University of Sydney, 2016., p 103. http://hdl.handle.net/2123/16921

home often led to loneliness and cultural isolation, causing some to succumb to alcoholism. To address this and keep particularly younger traders and officials in line, clubs were often established as a necessary social and regulatory measure.[123] Moreover, European imperial culture, with its emphasis on ritual and tradition, shaped the development of clubs, which adopted formalized social practices. British influence – particularly that of Scots in banking and trade – dominated the social character of Japan's foreign settlements, and because the majority of foreigners were British, the clubs and overall development of these communities took on a distinctly anglophile character. Yet access to club life was tightly controlled, often excluding missionaries, seamen, small traders, travelers, and those with a genuine interest in Japanese culture. At the same time, clubs offered structure and stability to expatriate communities and sometimes served as key points of contact for travelers. They took diverse forms, including exclusive gentlemen's clubs for wealthy merchants, military officers, and diplomats, Freemasonry lodges for those excluded from the elite clubs, and sport- or leisure-oriented clubs where hunting and horse racing were popular pastimes. These institutions reinforced social hierarchies while reflecting a broader transnational European phenomenon, as similar clubs – both British and German – emerged across multiple treaty ports, helping expatriates maintain cultural identity in an increasingly globalized world. Club life was primarily conducted in English or German, and affiliation generally followed national lines: Scandinavian and Dutch residents often joined German clubs[124], while other Europeans and Americans gravitated toward the "international" clubs dominated by British members. Alongside British and German clubs, Japanese clubs also existed, but unlike their foreign counterparts, they increasingly embraced an international and inclusive approach, allowing foreigners to participate alongside high-ranking Japanese officials, including members of the imperial household. Notable examples include the Tokyo Club (東京クラブ), the Kazoku Kaikan (華族会館, Peer's Club), and the Maple Club (紅葉館, Kōyō-kan), all reflecting Japan's enthusiasm for Western-style social life and the adoption of European gentleman's club

[123] Darren Lee Swanson: *Treaty Port Society and the Club in Meiji Japan: Clubbism, Athleticism and the Public Sphere*, Phd Thesis, University of Sydney, 2016., p. 330. http://hdl.handle.net/2123/16921

[124] Yokohama's *Club Germania* and Kobe's *Club Concordia*, founded by German merchants in the 1860s, became long-standing institutions modeled on British overseas clubs and attracted members with backgrounds similar to their British counterparts.

practices. The *Rokumeikan* (鹿鳴館, *Deer Cry Pavilio*n or *Hall of the Baying Stag*), designed by English architect Josiah Conder, became a prominent symbol of Japan's modernization and Westernization, intended to impress foreign dignitaries, though its influence waned until it was later transformed into the *Kazoku Kaikan*.[125] Overall, Japanese clubs were often more inclusive and refined than their foreign counterparts, blending domestic and Western traditions and signaling Japan's integration into global social and cultural networks. Both the Japanese elites and the expatriate communities were embedded in a wider "imagined community", sustained by newspapers, postal services, and shipping routes that linked Asian ports with European metropoles. Clubs were at the center of this identity, symbolizing both the cooperative norms of international society and the exclusionary practices typical of colonial enclaves. While Japan never experienced the rigid racial segregation seen in India or Africa, meaningful integration between foreigners and Japanese remained rare. As a result, cosmopolitanism in the treaty ports was more an aspiration than a lived reality.[126] For foreign travelers, Japanese clubs served as accessible social hubs where they could mingle with international officers, merchants, and students. Membership in one club often granted privileges at affiliated clubs, and some, like the *Maple Club*, even became tourist attractions. These clubs offered dining, entertainment, and a traditional Japanese setting, allowing foreigners to socialize on relatively equal terms with Japanese elites – a courtesy not always returned by residents of the treaty settlements. By the 1880s, club culture was well established in Japan, even crossing gender boundaries more than in some Western countries. Many clubs promoted Westernization, such as the *Rōmaji*

[125] The Rokumeikan embodied the government's effort to adopt European customs and showcase Japan's modernization, though many Japanese saw it as an excessive and humiliating imitation of the West. Critics, like Pierre Loti, mocked it as superficial, calling it a "monkey show". For example, Hirobumi Ito's government was dubbed "the dancing cabinet" following an extravagant 1887 Rokumeikan ball, widely regarded as a PR fiasco, after which enthusiasm for Western customs declined amid a growing conservative backlash. Despite this, the Rokumeikan stood as a key symbol of Meiji modernity and Japan's political ambition to appear equal to Western powers. See: Darren L. Swanson: *Gentlemanly Capitalism and the Club*. In: ejcjs, Volume 12, Issue 1 (article 1 in 2012). First published in ejcjs on 1 May 2012. pp. 11-12.; Darren Lee Swanson: *Treaty Port Society and the Club in Meiji Japan: Clubbism, Athleticism and the Public Sphere*, Phd Thesis, University of Sydney, 2016. p. 205. http://hdl.handle.net/2123/16921. Next to the Rokumeikan activities, garden parties offered similar venues for fostering cordial relations through official visits to Japanese aristocratic estates, where high-ranking Western and Japanese figures attended. Often featuring foreign dress and dancing, these gatherings facilitated interaction and cultural exchange between officials. See: Luke Schöppler: *The Meiji Legacy: Gardens and Parks of Japan and Britain, 1850-1914*. PhD Thesis. University of Derby, 2020., p. 208.

[126] Darren Lee Swanson: *Treaty Port Society and the Club in Meiji Japan: Clubbism, Athleticism and the Public Sphere*, Phd Thesis, University of Sydney, 2016. pp. 10-192. http://hdl.handle.net/2123/16921

Club and various societies dedicated to women's etiquette and fashion. While modest by modern standards, these groups reflected the era's emerging liberal attitudes.[127]

An invitation addressed to Dezső Bozóky to the cherry blossom festival in the gardens of the Imperial Palace, April 1908 (Hopp Múzeum)

Swanson further sheds light on the often strained relations between foreigners and the Japanese. Racism was widespread in the treaty ports, though somewhat less

[127] Darren Lee Swanson: *Treaty Port Society and the Club in Meiji Japan: Clubbism, Athleticism and the Public Sphere*, Phd Thesis, University of Sydney, 2016. pp. 122-126. http://hdl.handle.net/2123/16921

intense than in colonial India. Those who attempted to challenge social boundaries risked ostracism, and while some residents supported closer ties between Westerners and the Japanese, the ports' so-called "internationalism" largely excluded the Chinese. Many locals viewed the foreign presence with resentment, or at best reluctant tolerance, as expatriates frequently displayed a colonial mindset marked by condescension toward Japanese society. This attitude not only deepened hostility but, according to some accounts, contributed to a sense of psychological inferiority among the Japanese. Although Japan was never formally colonized, its treaty port society strongly resembled colonial enclaves elsewhere in Asia, with pronounced social and racial segregation, especially in Yokohama and Kobe.[128] This was evident in legal matters overseen by Consular Courts, which were widely perceived by the Japanese as favoring foreigners. For their part, foreign residents were determined to maintain the extraterritorial system that secured their privileges and safeguarded their established way of life.

The foreign settlements appeared to many foreign tourists as out-of-place anachronisms, as observed by Swanson. The residents' European-style buildings and expatriate lifestyles stood in stark contrast to expectations of an "authentic" Japanese encounter. Nonetheless, life in the treaty ports could be highly comfortable, with merchants in the 1870s enjoying a luxurious standard of living on comparatively modest earnings (in the early years after the Meiji regime change, costs were low, and a merchant earning 250 yen a month could live a life of luxury). Yokohama, in particular, gained notoriety as the "Wild East", a place of striking contrasts where wealth coexisted with squalor amid its hotels, grog shops, and brothels. Western traders in East Asia were closely tied to the colonial system, not only bringing Western goods but promoting ideas of Western superiority by recreating Euro-American social and bureaucratic structures in the region. At the same time, the treaty port system played a significant role in positioning Japan as an emerging destination for international tourism.[129] As for the overall role of the treaty port residents, Darren L. Swanson offers an insightful perspective: "*Whether conscious of doing so or not, port residents were agents of*

[128] Kobe, Japan's second-largest foreign settlement, is well-documented in English and is still known across Japan for its strong sense of "foreignness".

[129] Darren Lee Swanson: *Treaty Port Society and the Club in Meiji Japan: Clubbism, Athleticism and the Public Sphere*, Phd Thesis, University of Sydney, 2016. pp. 10-192. http://hdl.handle.net/2123/16921

influence in their role as propagators of imperialist ideology, particularly in regard to the unravelling of the thin veil of internationalism that they pertained to uphold. While Japan's treaty ports had major significance as global commercial hubs that unquestionably provided much of the stimulus for the industrial development of Japan, the habits of the settler community that inhabited them must also, by association, be held responsible in part for the rise of Japan's imperialist expansion and its consequences".[130]

By the turn of the nineteenth century, the looming end of extraterritoriality highlighted the fragile position of foreign residents in Japan. Among the British, perceptions shifted toward a paternalistic appreciation of Japanese industrial and military achievements, especially following victories in China and Korea, fueling the notion of Japan as the "*Britain of the Far East*". By the early 1900s, the foreign population had declined, and the success of foreign commerce increasingly depended on cooperation with the Japanese. The exclusivity of European clubs had long been contested, and Japanese participation became more feasible, even allowing them to take leadership roles. Simultaneously, the foreign social and economic framework was gradually supplanted by domestic structures: semi-foreign houses rented from Japanese landlords, salaries that stretched less far, and Japanese-made goods replacing imported luxuries. Many transient foreign workers left Japan, while those who remained, having spent much of their lives there, often felt more integrated into Japanese society, though most foreign residents showed little enthusiasm for deeper social bonds with their Japanese hosts. Swanson argues that foreign enclaves in East Asia never developed into fully-fledged colonial dominions, and no single national community, whether Anglo-Japanese, French, German, or American, truly formed. Instead, a broader Pan-East Asian settlement identity emerged, with club affiliation as one of several defining features, reflecting the complexities of these multicultural, semi-colonial societies.[131]

[130] Darren Lee Swanson: *Treaty Port Society and the Club in Meiji Japan: Clubbism, Athleticism and the Public Sphere*, Phd Thesis, University of Sydney, 2016. p. 375. http://hdl.handle.net/2123/16921
[131] Darren Lee Swanson: *Treaty Port Society and the Club in Meiji Japan: Clubbism, Athleticism and the Public Sphere*, Phd Thesis, University of Sydney, 2016. pp. 366-371. http://hdl.handle.net/2123/16921

Foreign merchants in the Japanese treaty ports rarely committed their lives to paper; consequently, the treaty port press remains our chief source for reconstructing their world. Travelers, by contrast, often recorded their journeys in detail, and accounts from visitors such as Hungarian travelers offer a different kind of insight into life in Japan.

Travel history of Hungarians traveling to Japan

Many Hungarian travelers and businessmen set out to see Japan firsthand, but they were far from fitting the typical image of 'clubbable'[132] foreigners in the country. The *Explanatory Dictionary of the Hungarian Language* defines a traveler as "*an explorer who ventures into distant, little-known areas*". James Clifford defines traveler as someone who departs from their home to obtain something – whether tangible, intangible, or both – in another location.[133] The *Hungarian Travelers' Lexicon* notes that technological and social developments have changed and facilitated travel over time. In the past, simply reaching a distant continent was enough to earn someone the title of traveler. With the specialization of the sciences, travelers' activities became more focused: experts embarked on journeys for predetermined purposes such as geographical and climatic research, botanical and zoological collections, ethnographic observations, business, linguistic studies, and similar endeavors. This was also true of Hungarian travelers who journeyed from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to Japan at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. At that time, they were able to visit Japan not only on scientific and commercial expeditions but also on other official, semi-official, and civilian trips, to a country they themselves described as a "*fairyland cloaked in the dark drapery of the unknown*" for centuries.

When it comes to labeling travelers from the Hungarian Kingdom in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as "Hungarian travelers", the author can only offer a

[132] Suitable for a club or fit for socializing in a club setting. The word implies that a person possesses the qualities, social rank, and wealth that make them suitable or appealing for membership and social interaction within a gentleman's club setting.
[133] James Clifford: *Spatial Practices: Fieldwork, Travel, and the Disciplining of Anthropology.* In: Akhil Gupta, James Ferguson (eds): Anthropological Locations. Boundaries and Grounds of a Field Science. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1997., pp. 197.

semi-satisfactory explanation. The term primarily refers to native Hungarians, “(self-)Hungarianized” ethnic speakers with Hungarian identities, and even non-native speakers who identified as Hungarian. Some of these individuals, after returning to the Hungarian Kingdom (or the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy) from their trips, published their knowledge, insights, and experiences gained in Japan. They often exhibited their collections in Hungarian institutions or made donations to Hungarian public collections. More broadly, the term also applies to anyone with a clear or presumed Hungarian identity who left behind a body of work of lesser or greater significance in a field related to Japan, or who became notable in connection with Japan – even if they did not publish in Hungarian about their time abroad, or if their writings remain unpublished. Such individuals might not have contributed directly to the development of Hungarian public knowledge, but their connection to Japan and their chosen identity make them part of this category. Among the Hungarian travelers who visited Japan between 1868 and 1913 were journalists, teachers, aristocrats, merchants, artists, and sailors, representing a wide range of social strata. We know the birth and travel dates of only 66 individuals, whose average age on their first trip to Japan was 34. Of the 133 Hungarian travelers traced (including some who later became residents), almost all were men; only nine women were found. Repeat travelers account for 8,5 percent of all cases. The available data indicate four main intervals for the length of stay in Japan. In cases where the number of days spent in Japan is known or can be estimated (86 out of 133 cases), the most common stays lasted between one week and three months, accounting for about 48 percent of cases. Longer stays – ranging from three months to one year and from one to three years – accounted for 12 and 13 percent, respectively. Stays of more than three years made up 27 percent of the cases. The peak years for Hungarian travelers visiting Japan, with ten or more travels per year, were 1869, between 1904 and 1905, and in 1910. Relatively active periods, with about five to ten travels per year, occurred between 1890 and 1893, as well as in 1897, 1900, 1902, and from 1906 to 1909. During the 1869-1913 period, both official and civilian travel from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to Japan increased. Based on my own estimates, the total number of Hungarian visitors to Japan between 1868 and 1913 was likely between 200 and 300

people.[134] From 1866 to 1899, there was an average of 2.75 trips per year, while between 1900 and 1913, the average rose to seven trips per year. The main reasons for this surge were the appeal of Japanese art, Japan's participation in various world exhibitions of the period, and the country's modernization and rise as a great power. In 1902, the diplomatic news section of Szalon Újság reported the following:

> "*The most interesting diplomatic news: Japan's rise to superpower status. Over the course of two to four years, Japan will gradually establish embassies in European courts and in America, thereby becoming part of the concert of European great powers. Japan has long been predestined for this, and since its recent pro-British policy, it has already been a great power, but it has not been officially recognized as such in terms of external appearances and formalities. Now this will also happen. And rightly so, because Japan has earned it; it has demonstrated this in recent years with its great state-sustaining power and ability, but it has also earned it with its millennial culture, which in itself is also a great power among different cultures.*"[135]

Japan as a great power thus appeared in the Hungarian press from 1902 onwards, as further evidenced by the following article excerpts:

> "*Now, as we understand, Japan is also joining the ranks of the great powers. Its alliance with England was the first step towards recognition; now all the European great powers have joined it. Japan will therefore soon convert all its European legations into embassies. However, Vienna will not receive a separate ambassador, but the Japanese ambassador in Berlin will be accredited to our monarchy. Japan is the eighth actual great power*".[136]

> *"(...) the practical and increasingly prosaic Japan is now a significant power capable of taking an aggressive stance against other powers"*[137]

[134] For exact data, see the separate, updated online list of Hungarian travelers available at the following link: https://archive.org/details/utazok-osszesito-tablazat (accessed: 2026 July)
[135] Szalon Újság, 1902. nov. 15. Translated by the author.
[136] Magyarország, 1902. december 30. Translated by the author.
[137] Katolikus Szemle 18., 1904:6.

Hungarian sympathy toward Japan reached its peak during and after the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, which further stimulated travel. In addition, new shipping routes from Europe to Japan had a positive impact on civilian travel. Direct passenger transport between the Dual Monarchy and Japan began twenty years after the 1869 trade agreement, when Austrian Lloyd (*Österreichischer Lloyd*) launched its shipping services to Yokohama in 1889–90.[138] Since the German Norddeutscher Lloyd had already launched regular monthly services to Yokohama in 1886, by the 1890s travel to Japan from Europe was hardly considered an exotic undertaking.[139] This is confirmed by Count István Géza Mailáth (1860-1933) in his 1892 article about his trip to Japan, published in *Földrajzi Közlemények*: "*Traveling to this wonderland is no longer considered a major expedition. Anyone who has money, good health, and is immune to seasickness can easily undertake it.*"[140] Hungarian travelers wrote newspaper articles, books, travelogues, and reports, and delivered lectures about Japan, a country that was becoming increasingly accessible while remaining an unknown and distant land to many of their contemporaries. To satisfy the growing curiosity of Hungarian readers, more travelogues were published as standalone books and in Hungarian newspapers around the turn of the century.

Below is a breakdown by year of Hungarians who visited or lived in Japan between 1866 and 1913. Listing these individuals might seem uninteresting from an international perspective; however, I would like to offer a counter-argument: the experiences of these people reveal much that can be woven into a globally relevant historiography, including trends, encounters, routes, and transnational networks. Additionally, micro-historical studies of individual transimperial lives can enrich our understanding of modern transimperial history, revealing complex networks of interests. From this perspective, including the experiences of Hungarian travelers could be

[138] Józsa Sándor: *Kína és az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia*, 1966., p. 59. The Austrian Lloyd was founded in 1833 in Trieste, then part of the Austrian Empire, modeled after London's Lloyd's Register of Shipping. At first, it was a maritime information and insurance bureau (collecting and publishing shipping news), and only later (from 1836 onward) did it begin operating steamships. By the late 19th century, Österreichischer Lloyd had become one of the largest shipping companies in the Mediterranean, with regular routes extending to the Near East and Asia.
[139] In 1886, Norddeutscher Lloyd introduced two monthly sailings, with the journey to Japan lasting approximately 40 days. Claudia Schmidhofer: *Fakt und Fantasie - Das Japanbild in deutschsprachigen Reiseberichten 1854-1900*, Vienna Studies on East Asia Vol. 1., Praesens Verlag, Wien, 2010., p. 31.
[140] Majláth Géza: *A japáni szigetvilágon keresztül*; Földrajzi Közlemények, 1892.; pp. 171-172. Translated by the author.

valuable for future research, since such individuals acted as “connectors” – intermediaries, go-betweens, and brokers – linking different empires and contexts.

1866

The American-Hungarian emigrant Gyula Stáhel (after obtaining American citizenship: Julius H. Stahel) (1825–1912), a bookseller in Pest, one of the main leaders of the Hungarian War of Independence of 1848–49, and later a lieutenant general in the American Civil War, was appointed U.S. consul to Japan (Yokohama) in 1866 by William Henry Seward, the then U.S. Secretary of State and a friend of Kossuth and Hungary. Stáhel served as consul in Yokohama until 1869, where he was entrusted with reorganizing the American consulate. He then returned to the U.S., only to be reappointed to Japan in 1877, serving as American consul in Osaka and Hyogo (now Kobe) until 1884.[141]

1868

On **January** 15, József Vanek (1818-1889), a magician and world-renowned illusionist, arrived in Yokohama, and on the 22nd, he left Japan (he did not perform at that time, only in 1874 and 1877, when he visited Japan again). Originally a Hungarian revolutionary, he was appointed by Lajos Kossuth in 1848 as head of the state printing office. When the revolution failed, he fled with Kossuth to Turkey, where his early fascination with magic grew into a career. In Constantinople, he performed before Sultan Abdul Mecid, then traveled through Cairo, Palestine, Persia, Calcutta, China, and Japan, gaining fame for stage illusions. By 1851, he was among the first magicians to make a horse vanish on stage using a black backdrop. After returning to Europe, he performed for Napoleon III and Queen Victoria (at Windsor in 1854). His signature illusion was the decapitation trick, featuring a lifelike bleeding head. He later toured the U.S. in 1873, cementing his reputation as one of the 19th century’s pioneering stage magicians.[142]

[141] MOL, R 170., the heritage of Gyula Stáhel (Számvald)
[142] Gisela und Dietmar Winkler: *Das große Hokuspokus - Aus dem Leben berühmter Magier.* Berlin 1981, pp. 528-529.

1869

It is believed that around 1869–1870, a Hungarian gynecologist, Dr. József Kempf (József d'Angreth Kempf, 1818–1900), who was living in Australia, traveled around the world and made landfall in Japan. Unfortunately, there is no direct or conclusive information about his visit to Japan.[143]

Between **September** 6 and **November** 4, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy conducted a joint expedition to East Asia. The Hungarian delegates were the publicist Ivor Kaas, journalist Manó Cserei, ethnographer János Xántus, and diplomats Géza Bernáth and László Hengelmüller (more details about the trip can be found in Chapter Two).

The first Hungarians to become involved in trade in Japan were members of the Kuhn and Komor families: Moritz Kuhn, Artúr Kuhn, Izidor Komor, and Siegfried Komor. Artúr Kuhn met the Komor brothers while traveling in China, and they were also connected by family ties, as Artúr Kuhn married Regina Komor. Like the Komors, the Kuhns initially established an antique, or *curio shop* in China. The Komors had shops in Shanghai and Hangzhou. Artúr Kuhn opened a shop in Yokohama, Japan, in 1869 under the name *Kuhn & Co*., (クーン商会 in Japanese) and by September 1874 he already had a branch in Yokohama's most popular and prestigious hotel, the Grand Hotel. Twenty years later, Szigfrid Komor also decided to go to Japan; according to contemporary sources, he was active there in the late 1880s and operated a company called *Daibutsu*. The families initially established their joint business in Japan, and as a result of their collaboration, they opened a successful curio shop called *Kuhn & Komor* in Yokohama in 1895, followed by another in Kobe in 1897. (They were also present in China under the same name.) Since the history of these curio shops is somewhat confusing, some clarification and differentiation are needed. ***Kuhn & Co.*** was founded first. It was established by Márkus Móric Kuhn (who later used the name Maurice Montague Kuhn, or M.M. Kuhn), a Hungarian Jewish art dealer who arrived in Yokohama in 1867. He officially founded his business in 1869. The company specialized in Japanese (and later Chinese and Indian) art objects and curios, and it expanded

[143] Takács Béla: *Dr. Kempf József, a világjáró debreceni orvos (1818–1900)*. A Debreceni Déri Múzeum Évkönyve 1987, Debrecen, 1988. p. 323.

rapidly. By the 1880s, it had become an internationally successful firm, with branches in Yokohama, Calcutta, Singapore, and later London. It earned medals at international exhibitions and even gained royal patronage in Britain.

Kuhn and Co.'s new grand depot in Yokohama, 1886

Ownership remained with M.M. Kuhn, and later his son, Henry Samuel Kuhn, briefly continued the business after his father's death in 1901. However, family scandal and legal troubles led to the collapse of ***Kuhn & Co.*** by 1907. ***Kuhn & Komor*** was founded later, in 1892, in Hong Kong. It was established by Artúr Kuhn and Szigfrid Komor. Arthur Kuhn was the nephew and former employee of M.M. Kuhn. He had worked for Kuhn & Co. for many years as a traveling agent. Szigfrid Komor was a relative through extended family connections and had also worked within the Kuhn business network. The immediate cause of the new company's creation was the bankruptcy of M.M. Kuhn's bank in 1892. Facing a financial crisis, M.M. Kuhn sold his Hong Kong shop and stock not to competitors, but to his loyal employees Arthur and Szigfrid. They registered their new firm as Kuhn & Komor in July 1892. Although born out of Kuhn & Co.'s financial difficulties, Kuhn & Komor became an independent and competing company. It developed its own brand identity (including the "Stork and Sun" trademark and later the K&K mark), built a strong international network (Hong Kong, Yokohama, Kobe, and Shanghai), and became especially famous for high-quality Japanese silver objects designed for Western markets. The firm was sometimes called the "Asprey of Asia" because of its luxury silver goods. Over time, Kuhn&Komor flourished during the golden

age of the modern curio trade. In essence, the two companies were separate businesses, founded 13 years apart, with different legal ownership. ***Kuhn & Co.*** belonged to M.M. Kuhn and later his son. ***Kuhn & Komor*** belonged to Arthur Kuhn and Szigfrid Komor (later joined by other members of the Komor family). They became direct rivals and publicly distanced themselves from one another in their advertisements. (To make things even more confusing, M. M. Kuhn also had another store, called the Yokohama Fine Art Depot, and from the 1890s onward, we also find a member of the Kuhn family, Gyula Kuhn, living in Japan.)

ESTABLISHED 1869.
KUHN & Co.
GRAND DEPOT OF ANCIENT AND MODERN FINE JAPANESE AND CHINESE CURIOSITIES, AND ORIENTAL WORKS OF ART.
Orders Promptly Executed.
No. 79. MAIN STREET. No. 79.

\- - -

ESTABLISHED 1869.
KUHN & Co.
UNDER the Distinguished Patronage of their R. H. The Duke and Duchess of Connaught. Grand Depot of Ancient and modern fine Curiosities, Japanese, Chinese, Indian and Oriental Works of Art. Twelve Gold, Five Silver and Four Bronze Medals with first-class certificates of merit have been awarded to our Exhibits at the Calcutta International Exhibition 1883-1884.

Advertisements for Kuhn's antique shop in Yokohama

Official trademark of Kuhn&Komor

Kuhn&Komor was considered one of the most prestigious dealers in Japanese and Chinese artworks of its time. In 1913, the business was advertised in *Murray's Handbook*[144], as one of the most important foreign-owned shops selling Japanese applied art. They primarily dealt in antiques, but they also manufactured and sold their own branded products – including furniture, porcelain, silverware, and postcards – in both China and Japan. Several Hungarian travelers and art collectors were served by their curio shop, and through them, many Hungarian public and private collections acquired Japanese objects. Their business success and high-margin practices are reflected in a Japanese nickname: a pun (食うに困る, "to have trouble making a living") that rhymes with the name Kuhn&Komor (クーン及コモル).[145] The pun may have expressed the bitterness of Japanese rival curio shops or even of the Japanese craftsmen working for Kuhn & Komor – essentially implying that if Kuhn and Komor continued their success, their competitors or suppliers might eventually be left high and dry. The expression can also be interpreted in a more ironic sense, as if wishing that Kuhn and Komor themselves would someday be left in a difficult situation. In Hungarian accounts of Kuhn and Co. and Kuhn and Komor, the curio shops are generally depicted in a positive light, though some considered the goods expensive:

> "*Kuhn and Co., who are of Hungarian Jewish origin (...), have quite expensive prices, but they are still considerably cheaper than in Europe. Later, I went to another Hungarian Jew, Kuhn and Komor, who has beautiful goods, but is also outrageously expensive. I bought all sorts of things from him.*"[146]
>
> "*European merchants say that the Japanese are big cheats and rip off buyers with every product, charging a hundred times more than it's worth. That may be true, but if the Japanese charge a hundred times more, then European*

[144] Murray's Handbook was a widely respected series of travel guides published by the British firm John Murray, providing practical information, historical context, and cultural notes for travelers. By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the guides covered regions across Europe and Asia and sometimes included advertisements for prominent local businesses, signaling their prestige and recognition among international travelers.

[145] Based on a short Japanese note written in the Kanagawa Cultural Affairs Office, presumably in the 1910s. The translation of the original Japanese text is published by: Kiss Sándor: *Magyarok, akik szerették Japánt. Első rész* (kézirat), Budapest, Magyar-Japán Gazdasági Klub, 2013., p. 106.

[146] Béla Rakovszky's handwritten, later typed diary from 1901, p. 105.; Rakovszky-hagyaték, Történeti Dokumentációs Leltár (TDL), Hansági Múzeum. Translated by the Author.

merchants in Yokohama and Tokyo charge 400 times more. I bought my most beautiful possessions from the Japanese."[147]

ENGLISH SPOKEN.
ON PARLE FRANCAIS.
BY APPOINTMENT
KUHN & KOMOR,
PATRONIZED BY
H.R.H. The Crown Prince of Austria & Hungary.
H.R.H. The Crown Prince of Russia.
The Duke & Duchess of Connaught.
H.R.H. Prince Henry of Prussia &c &c
K&K
GREAT SPECIALITIES
Of All Classes of Antique and Modern
Fine Art Curiosities
Silk embroideries, Silver, Bronze, Porcelain, Ivory, etc., etc.
Goods Packed, Insured and Forwarded to all parts of the World.
MAN SPRICHT DEUTCH.
MAGYARUL BESZELUNK.
K&K
KUHN & KOMOR,
No. 37, YOKOHAMA.
Opposite the "GRAND HOTEL."
PLEASE NOTE
THAT
K. & K. have only ONE store in Yokohama, and this is at No. 37, Water Street, Opposite the "Grand Hotel."
!! Show this card to your JINRIKISHAW MAN !!
横濱山下町三十七番
クーンコモル商會
KUHN & KOMOR,
ART CURIO DEPOT.
Please remember this building
Front view of K. & K.'s store, Yokohama,
Opposite the "GRAND HOTEL."
Branches of K. & K.
HONGKONG, UNDER THE "HONGKONG HOTEL."
SHANGHAI, UNDER THE "CENTRAL HOTEL."
YOKOHAMA, OPPOSITE THE "GRAND HOTEL."
KOBE, OPPOSITE THE "ORIENTAL HOTEL."
MEMO.

Kuhn & Komor advertisements, 1906.

[147] Béla Rakovszky's handwritten, later typed diary from 1901, p. 121.; Rakovszky-hagyaték, Történeti Dokumentációs Leltár (TDL), Hansági Múzeum. Translated by the Author.

Silver hallmark and a silver set distributed by Kuhn and Komor

1870

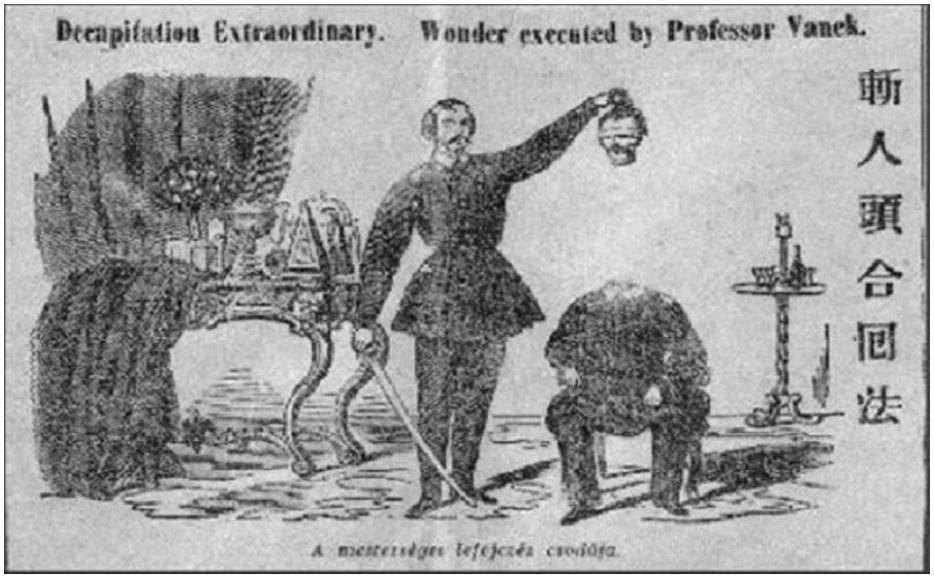
Gerő Baraczy/Baraczi (1846–1883) of Rimaszombat graduated from the *Oriental Academy of Commerce (Keleti Kereskedelmi Akadémia)* and traveled to Japan, India, Turkey, and New York – allegedly on a diplomatic mission. Unfortunately, little information about him is available. He may have been in Japan sometime between 1870 and 1880, though this is uncertain.[148]

1874

Between **March** 11 and 28, József Vanek (1818-1889), a magician and world-renowned illusionist, toured Japan for the second time, performing in Yokohama.[149]

[148] Pesti Hírlap, 1883. Március, 5. évfolyam, 60-89. szám, 1883-03-27 / 85. szám

[149] For more details on his performances, see: http://blog.livedoor.jp/misemono/archives/52078665.html (accessed: 2015 March). The venue for the 1874 performance was the Goethe Theater (ゲーテ座) in Yokohama. Transcriptions of Vanek's name can be found in contemporary Japanese newspapers as: ヴァネク, バネツク, ハネック



Vanek's signature illusion, ‘the miracle of artificial decapitation’ (vanekprof.hupont.hu)

Adelheid (Adele) Retz, née Vanek (1854–?), the daughter of József Vanek moved to Japan in 1874 as the wife of Friedrich Wilhelm Retz (1845–1923), a German merchant and watch dealer who had settled there in 1872 and became one of the prominent foreign businessmen in Yokohama. Friedrich initially worked for Schwartz & Co., a Swiss watch and jewelry firm, before establishing his own company, F. Retz & Co., which imported Swiss watches and later expanded into general trade, shipping, and brewing ventures. Owing to his wife’s Hungarian origins, he actively promoted trade between Austria-Hungary and Japan. He also served as consul for Holland, Sweden, and Norway, and was decorated with the Order of Orange-Nassau, the Prussian Order of the Crown, and the Japanese Red Cross Cross of Merit for his civic contributions. Adele accompanied her husband to Yokohama in 1874, where they first lived on the Bluff and later at Yokohama No. 214. In 1883 she moved to Germany with their children but came back to Japan in 1892. After her return, the family lived at Yokohama No. 71 Bluff, and in 1895 they acquired a villa in Kamakura, which became a favorite retreat. Adele Retz therefore lived in Japan during two main periods, from 1874 to 1883 and again from 1892 until at least 1923.[150]

[150] https://meiji-portraits.de/meiji_portraits_r.html (accessed: 2025 Nov.)

1876

In this year, Károly Cziriák (?-?), a Hungarian tailor, reported from Japan for the *Fővárosi Lapok* newspaper. He had embarked on a journey around the world, partly to gain professional experience and partly to seek business opportunities. During his travels, he sojourned in Japan as well, but after three weeks he was forced to leave, somewhat disappointed. Cziriák returned to Budapest in 1877, where he opened a tailor shop.

From **May** 12 to **June** 27, 1876, Ágost Zichy (1852–1925) and József Zichy (1841–1924) traveled through Japan.[151] The exact details of the journey are recorded in József Zichy's diary (volumes X–XII.), which was edited and published for the first time in Hungary in 2013.[152] The personal and often humorous diary reveals many fascinating details about the brothers' time in Japan, making it worthwhile to examine and present the text in more detail. Their main route was as follows: Nagasaki–Kobe–Osaka–Nara–Kyoto–Nagoya–Hakone–Yokohama–Tokyo–Nikko. The Zichys frequently met with high-ranking Japanese officials, and the emperor himself granted them a personal audience. Thanks to his connections with politicians and government officials, József carried letters of recommendation from influential figures. He paid a visit to Japanese political contacts he had met personally at the 1873 World's Fair in Vienna. Among them, József Zichy knew both Tomomi Iwakura and Tsunetami Sano. He visited Iwakura on May 29, 1876, and Sano on May 30 and June 19, writing the following about the latter: "*His delicate, cunning features reveal initiative and decisiveness. Despite his age, he is a lively statesman who still plays a leading role.*"[153]

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[151] Count Ágost Zichy was a Hungarian noble, politician, diplomat, and geographer. A member of the influential Zichy family, he undertook extensive travels across Europe, Asia, and North America, presenting his findings to the Hungarian Geographical Society. He became a corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1880. Politically, he served as a Member of Parliament from 1879 and was appointed governor of Fiume (today Rijeka, Croatia) from 1883 to 1892, later joining the House of Magnates. Count József Zichy was a Hungarian noble, politician, and explorer. He was the son of Count Ferenc Zichy. Known for extensive travels across Europe, Asia, and America – including a notable journey through the Gobi Desert with his brother Ágost – he documented his experiences in a personal diary.

[152] Gróf Zichy József: *Gróf Zichy József utazásai I. – Ázsiai útinapló 1875-76*. Budapest, Széphalom Könyvműhely-OSZK, 2013., pp. 159-190.; The manuscript was kept in the Bratislava archives until 1978. Later, a photocopy was sent to a museum in Nagyszombat, and in 2006 it was published in a Slovak translation. The original Hungarian edition was edited by Dr. Mihály Zichy, a distant relative of the Zichy family and an employee of the National Széchényi Library in Budapest. The author apparently did not intend to publish his work, writing the notes solely for his own use.

[153] Gróf Zichy József: *Gróf Zichy József utazásai I. – Ázsiai útinapló 1875-76*. Budapest, Széphalom Könyvműhely-OSZK, 2013., p. 175. Translated by the Author.

They had an official audience with the Japanese emperor on June 1, 1876. For the meeting, they wore full Hungarian formal attire and were accompanied by Heinrich Siebold and the Italian minister. "*The Tennō greeted us standing next to an armchair, wearing white trousers and a gold-embroidered tailcoat. His face did not show much liveliness.*"[154] During the audience, József Zichy read a greeting, to which the emperor responded in Japanese, translated by an interpreter. The Zichys' trip could be considered semi-official, although the brothers were primarily motivated by the curiosity and personal interests typical of aristocratic travelers of the time. Having first traveled dirty Canton, China, the things that struck them most in Nagasaki were the cleanliness and order, as well as the Japanese women, whose "*beauty is coupled with natural grace*", with their "*picturesque dresses*" serving as the icing on the cake.[155] Throughout Japan, they met many high-ranking foreign diplomats and notable figures: the local British consuls, officials of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Italian minister, Austrians living in Japan, and others. Heinrich Siebold, interpreter for the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, accompanied them on several occasions as a guide, and Baron Stillfried, an Austrian photographer residing in Yokohama, also hosted them. The Zichys mostly stayed in Western-style hotels, although they occasionally opted for traditional Japanese accommodations, which they referred to as "paper boxes" or "paper shrines". Naturally, they could not escape the art-collecting passion typical of the era, as evidenced by the following diary entry: "*Perhaps there is no country in the world more dangerous for the wallet than Japan. A veritable legion of bronze, wood, lacquer, and bamboo objects is constantly tempting us.*"[156] In Zichy's own words, he made "*more numerous than valuable acquisitions*"[157] in Japan, suggesting that he likely did not collect the most high-quality items during his stay.

> "*The collecting mania is so widespread here that everyone who spends a longer time in Japan eventually succumbs to the fever. Mrs. Castelli collects iron objects*

[154] Gróf Zichy József: *Gróf Zichy József utazásai I. – Ázsiai útinapló 1875-76*. Budapest, Széphalom Könyvműhely-OSZK, 2013., pp. 176-177. Translated by the Author.
[155] Gróf Zichy József: *Gróf Zichy József utazásai I. – Ázsiai útinapló 1875-76*. Budapest, Széphalom Könyvműhely-OSZK, 2013., p. 160. Translated by the Author.
[156] Gróf Zichy József: *Gróf Zichy József utazásai I. – Ázsiai útinapló 1875-76*. Budapest, Széphalom Könyvműhely-OSZK, 2013., p. 163. Translated by the Author.
[157] Gróf Zichy József: *Gróf Zichy József utazásai I. – Ázsiai útinapló 1875-76*. Budapest, Széphalom Könyvműhely-OSZK, 2013., p. 172. Translated by the Author.

no longer than 25 centimeters and already has 600 pieces arranged by province; the wife of Struwe, the Russian envoy,[158] collects tiny teapots and has nearly 200 of them; Fè[159] has put together a collection of nail heads from main beams; Siebold has three or four different collections – drawings, bronzes, and so on. (…) Indeed, I too felt compelled to take up collecting something; as a result, I now have a collection of old Japanese bronze candlesticks."[160]

The Zichys visited various local exhibitions with great interest:

"*Japan is now living through the age of exhibitions; in rapidly adopting European customs, it has also surrendered itself to the ever-changing tides of fashion. (...) At the Osaka exhibition, some 1,000 exhibitors are taking part. (…) I observed agricultural produce, the district's industrial products, a few antiquities, printed works, and a great many objects belonging to the category of Japanese trinkets. The practical and elegant manner of display, and the degree of perfection attained, are striking: the aim is not the mere exhibition of isolated showpieces, but rather to keep before the eye the overall progress of industrial production, considered on a large scale.*"[161]

During the journey, they used a man-drawn carriage, a rickshaw, on several occasions: "*It is a very comfortable means of transport, suitable for short distances in the city, but I think it is nothing short of torture to be pulled along at a brisk trot for 7–8 hours on long journeys.*"[162] When traveling in a palanquin, József Zichy often got out and walked alongside it, not so much out of compassion for his porters as because the chair was uncomfortable, but in the cramped space, he constantly bumped his head and knees against the side walls. In early June, they traveled almost parallel to the Japanese emperor, who was touring the country with his cavalry delegation. On one occasion,

[158] Karl von Struve (1835–1907), a Baltic German nobleman who served as Russian Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Japan before being posted to the United States and the Netherlands.
[159] Conte Alessandro Fè d'Ostiani (1825–1905) graduated from the University of Vienna in 1848 and later served in the Brazilian, Persian, Swiss, Greek, and Japanese diplomatic missions. From 1870 to 1877, he was Italy's minister to Japan. Having gained the trust of the Japanese government, he played a role in the Iwakura Mission and took part in the Vienna World Exhibition as one of its delegates. He was also known as an art collector.
[160] Gróf Zichy József: *Gróf Zichy József utazásai I. – Ázsiai útinapló 1875-76*. Budapest, Széphalom Könyvműhely-OSZK, 2013., p. 183. Translated by the Author.
[161] Gróf Zichy József: *Gróf Zichy József utazásai I. – Ázsiai útinapló 1875-76*. Budapest, Széphalom Könyvműhely-OSZK, 2013., p. 163. Translated by the Author.
[162] Gróf Zichy József: *Gróf Zichy József utazásai I. – Ázsiai útinapló 1875-76*. Budapest, Széphalom Könyvműhely-OSZK, 2013., p. 164. Translated by the Author.

they stayed at the same accommodation – opposite wings of a temple building – and one member of the delegation, Tomomi Iwakura, treated them to a few bottles of beer.

1877

József Vanek (1818–1889), a magician and world-renowned illusionist, traveled to Japan for the third time, although the exact date of his performance remains unknown.[163]

Gyula Stáhel (Julius H. Stahel) was reappointed by the Americans to Japan in 1877, serving as the American consul in Osaka and Hyogo (now Kobe) until 1884. This marked Stáhel's second period in Japan.

Hermina Fischer Mrs. Ferenc Gillming (Gillmingné Fischer Hermina, or Gillming Ferencné), departed San Francisco for Japan on May 5, 1877, aboard the steamship Alaska, arriving in Yokohama on **May** 31. She did not remain in Japan long, as by June 10 she was already in Hong Kong. Hermina Fischer was the wife of Ferenc Gillming, a leather industrialist from Budapest (it is possible they traveled together, though no information confirms this). After her return to Budapest on September 19, 1877, she recorded the story of her journey around the world in a German-language book of several hundred pages (*Notizen unserer Reise um die Welt in den Jahren 1875–1877*. Budapest, Druck von Martin Bagó & Sohn, 1881).

1878

In **June**, Béla Széchenyi visited Japan. (Details of his expedition can be found in Chapter Two.)

1880

Gábor Kovács (1827–?) was a Hungarian 1848 revolutionary soldier from Kaposvár who later became an engineer and also lived in America. The Hungarian press referred to him as the '*citizen of Yokohama from Kaposvár*'. He is believed to have lived in Japan from the 1880s onward, where he allegedly married a Japanese woman and learned

[163] For more details on his performances, see: http://blog.livedoor.jp/misemono/archives/52078665.html (accessed: 2015 March).

Japanese. According to reports, he lived in Yokohama until 1909, when he traveled back to Hungary, after which he returned to Yokohama.[164]

1882

Ödön Faragó (1853–1925), the Monarchy's director of maritime customs, made a ten-day visit to Japan while returning home from his post in Tianjin. He arrived by ship from China on **June** 10, disembarking at Nagasaki, where he toured the city by rickshaw. During his stay, he traveled through Hyogo, Osaka, and Yokohama, later publishing a report of his journey in the *Vasárnapi Újság* newspaper. In it, he offered the following observations about Japan and the Japanese people:

> "*The Japanese began to civilize themselves more than a decade ago, discarding their national suits and starting to wear tailcoats and top hats. We saw a Japanese gentleman dressed in colorful European clothes, looking like a monkey, but the majority of the middle class still wore the much more picturesque national suits. Our eyes feasted most on the lovely Japanese women.*"[165]

We can see that he was particularly fond of attractive Japanese women, who, after Chinese women, seemed to him to have beautiful faces and kind, friendly smiles. At the same time, he used several derogatory terms to describe the Japanese: he repeatedly referred to them as 'monkey-like' people dressed in European clothes, compared their "tiny" railway to a toy that "cannot be taken seriously", and yet acknowledged that the train was both fast (traveling at 20 miles per hour) and punctual. Faragó paid a visit to a Buddhist temple and attended a military exercise in Osaka (which he described as a 'pitiful experience'), before departing Yokohama on June 23 to continue his journey to America. During his stay, a cholera epidemic broke out, and he expressed relief at being able to leave Japan quickly.

1883

In 1882, Ferenc Hopp (1833–1919), the renowned Hungarian art collector, set out on a journey around the world. He arrived in Japan via China in **May** 1883. This was his first

[164] Somogyvármegye, 1909-04-11 / 83. (1150.) szám p. 6.; Somogyvármegye, 1911-07-12 / 156. (1819.) szám p. 2.
[165] *Khinából hazafelé*. Vasárnapi Újság, 1882., augusztus 13., XXIX. évf., 33. szám, p. 526.

visit to the country, where he spent about a month traveling through its major cities. Although Hopp circumnavigated the globe several times, he returned to Japan in 1903 and again in 1914. In his earliest letters from May 1883, he wrote the following about Japan: "*Everything here is nice and neat–attractive, welcoming, and trustworthy (...) These Japanese people are excellent; wherever I look, I see refined taste.*"[166] He passed through to Nagasaki, Kobe, Osaka, Nara, Otsu, Lake Biwa, Nagoya, Kyoto, Nikko, Yokohama, and Tokyo, and he continuously purchased various items for his collection. On his third trip, in April 1914, he concluded that prices in Japan had risen so much that it was no longer worthwhile to buy artworks – yet he still could not resist acquiring items worth 3,146 yen. Hopp was well acquainted with the craftsmen and antique dealers of Kyoto and Osaka at the time, as evidenced by surviving records.[167]

Attila Szemere (1859–1905) embarked on a grand journey in 1882, across three continents, traveling through Morocco, Egypt, India, China, and finally Japan, where he arrived in **June** 1883 and spent a total of seven months collecting works of art. Szemere entered Japan as a kind of adventurer – a traveler in search of business opportunities – and at first intended to remain there for several years. This intention is reflected in a letter he sent to Ottó Herman[168] and in an article he later published in *Képes Családi Lapok* in 1904.[169] Unfortunately, very few written records of Szemere's travels survive: only a handful of brief diary excerpts (preserved in manuscript form) and a few contemporary articles, allowing us to reconstruct his journey only in broad outline. Péter Wintermantel, a researcher who examined the Japanese section of Szemere's estate in his thesis, identifies only five articles related to Japan. Even so, the estate still contains intriguing works, including Szemere's own translations, which – although not particularly significant in terms of literary value – offer a unique glimpse into the breadth of his interests. For example, consider how he wrote about the Japanese imperial couple in 1891:

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[166] HMA 170., HMA 171.
[167] Bincsik Mónika: *Maki-e – Válogatás a Hopp Ferenc Kelet-Ázsiai Művészeti Múzeum 19. századi japán lakkgyűjteményéből* (DVD) 2007.; Bincsik Mónika: *Japán műtárgyak gyűjtéstörténete Magyarországon a 19. század második felében – kitekintéssel a nemzetközi összefüggésekre*. Phd thesis, 2009., ELTE, pp. 104-116.
[168] MTA Kézirattár, Ms 278/115 I. Published in: Wintermantel Péter: *Szemere Attila Japánról és Kínáról.* Szakdolgozat, ELTE Japán szak, 1997, p. 80.
[169] *Képes Családi Lapok* 1904. 18. szám, pp. 320-321.

"*The emperor (...) no longer wears the heavy, gold-embroidered cloak of his ancestors, but has exchanged it for the banal Western military uniform, which – let's face it – suits His Imperial Majesty just as poorly as European women's clothing suits Haruko, the empress. I often had the opportunity to see the emperor at various ceremonies and at the horse races in Yokohama, but the empress rarely appeared in public, and I caught only a single glimpse of this (by Japanese standards) charming woman – once in Miyanoshita, the Japanese Tátrafüred in the mountains – when a gust of wind blew aside the silk curtain of her palanquin.*"[170]

Szemere's legacy includes a photograph that, according to its caption, shows him with his Japanese wife, "*To-yo-san*". The practice of temporary marriage was still common during Szemere's visit, but later, mainly due to Western objections, it started to decline in the 1890s.

Szemere and his Japanese wife

1886

Ferenc Gáspár (1861-1923), a ship's doctor, first visited Japan in this year; his travel report will be discussed later.

[170] Szemere Attila: *A mikádó*. In.: Vasárnapi Újság, XXXVIII. Évf., 23. szám, 1891. jún. 7., p. 370.

Imre Reichel (?–?) is believed to have traveled to Japan around 1886. Upon his return to Hungary, he organized an exhibition at Miskolc's Korona Hall from October 7 to 10, 1887, featuring a "*sea virgin from Japan, dried, with a human-shaped head*".[171]

Mermaid, eighteenth century, Japan, made of, among other things, fish skin, cotton-like filling, a metal wire, a human skull and the jaw of a dog (Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen)

In **August**, the Hungarian violinist Ede Reményi (1830–1898) gave a concert for Emperor Meiji and performed at the famous *Rokumeikan* (*Deer Cry Pavilion*, or *Hall of the Baying Stag*).[172] During his tour of Japan, Reményi first went to Kobe's foreign settlement, where he gave two performances (without Japanese guests), and later gave five performances in Yokohama, where the Kreutzer Sonata and Paganini's Caprice were included in the program. His penultimate concert took place at noon on August 10 before the Japanese emperor, followed by his performance at the Rokumeikan that same evening.[173] It is worth noting how surprised Reményi was that the Japanese emperor allegedly recognized the *Rákóczi March*.[174] As a memento, he reportedly received a '*pure gold box worth fifty thousand francs*' from the emperor. Unfortunately, Japanese newspapers did not report on the repertoire. However, an article published on August 12 offered the following account of Reményi: "*He is past middle age, half bald,*

[171] Borsod - Miskolci Értesítő, 1887-10-06.; Eger - hetilap, 1886-12-14. The description refers to a specific mermaid specimen, a "*Japanese mermaid*" or "*Japanese sea monster*". Such exhibits were common in 19th-century Europe, often presented as curiosities or scientific anomalies. These specimens were typically constructed from various animal parts, such as fish bodies and mammal heads, and were sometimes sold to collectors or displayed in exhibitions.

[172] A Japanese club modeled after English clubs, where the Japanese elite could meet foreigners.

[173] 松本善三『提琴有情 日本のヴァイオリン音楽史』レッスンの友社、1995年

[174] Vasárnapi Újság, 1891. (?). The Rákóczi March is a famous Hungarian patriotic march named after Francis II Rákóczi, the leader of the Hungarian uprising against Habsburg rule in the early 18th century. It became a symbol of Hungarian national pride and resistance.

but his gaze is penetrating and at first glance he gives the impression of a great artist. He plays the violin wonderfully, at an increasingly rapid tempo, captivating almost everyone who listens to him."[175] The newspapers also mention that during his last concert in Japan on August 11, the sound of a blind masseur's flute filtered into the concert hall, which made Reményi very nervous and caused him to interrupt the performance for a short time.

The Rokumeikan

1888

Elek Hörömpő (?–?), a naval officer born in Cegléd, was in Japan aboard the corvette SMS Fasana from **July** to August.[176] In his diary, he focused on Japanese girls:

> " *(...) we arrived at Yokohama, that famous port in Japan. Our wish had come true, for everyone had been eagerly awaiting our arrival in Japan. Like everything else, there was a reason for that too, because traveling for eleven months without seeing any beautiful women is unpleasant even to think about, let alone actually experience – especially for a Hungarian man! Even now, I get goosebumps when I think back on the Moorish and Chinese girls. (...) The Chinese girl is the epitome of ugliness, no less so than the Moors, from whom we had to fear that they would bite off our noses; their gaze and demeanor are wild, yet they still love people with white skin. Nothing can annoy them as much as when we grab the ring in their nose. It is quite different in Japan. Japanese girls*

[175] 東京日日新聞, 1886. aug. 12.

[176] https://www.facebook.com/vasikukmatrozok/posts/pfbid0365271L3jGGvW12uDMkjjjSaT9Aycqj1EibD2gGmxnH2tqRBZ94fivfGtvPe52vtil (accessed: 2026 June)

are beautiful (...) and kind. In fact, they possess more charm and refinement than a mischievous sailor could ever require. They sing, dance, play various instruments, and many are even skilled at the piano; in short, they go out of their way to put the Europeans they so adore in a good mood. True, it didn't take much to do that, but not only did we have a great time with them, we actually felt quite at home among them. This was clearly demonstrated by the fact that every single one of the men on leave on the first day stayed out until morning, even though they were only allowed to stay out until midnight. Apparently, the officers were also carried away by similar pleasures, because instead of the punishment expected for staying out without permission, the commander then allowed everyone to stay out until morning – which, however, was still not enough, because whoever has fun until morning can have fun until noon as well, since "we only live once, we're only in Japan once" – that was the motto. The Japanese girls are certainly pretty, even though they don't wear corsets but still follow the ancient custom. They all dress alike, though one's dress is made of more expensive fabric, with more silver and gold glittering on it than on the other's, but the cut is the same, which is all the more striking given that the Japanese have a great inclination to adopt European customs; they are keeping pace with us, unlike the Chinese, who are entrenched in their ancient customs. (...) They are very fond of jewelry and adorn themselves with it. In this respect, their taste is very similar to that of the Gypsies, for from their tiny ears hang large dangling earrings, and on their fingers sparkles a whole display of rings. (...) There is no difference in dress between women and girls; the only way to tell them apart is that the girls' teeth are white, while the women's are painted black. The latter did not make the best impression on us at first, because their mouth looked as if it were empty. (...) The men are not tall either; however, their physiques are well-developed, strong, and muscular; their heads are covered with thick black hair, their minds are sharp, and they are friendly, courteous, and sincere toward Europeans. Their national dress is just like that of the women, though we see the wealthier ones dressed in the European style, wearing black frock coats, patent leather shoes, and top hats. (...) Ever since missionaries

succeeded in sowing the seeds of the Christian faith in Japan – which have now taken root everywhere and large numbers are converting to the Christian faith, culture has been developing so rapidly there that Japan will soon reach the same level in this regard as some European countries. In Yokohama, Kobe, and Nagasaki, there are already higher girls' schools. European and American male and female teachers are employed in the lower elementary grades. The children there speak English better than Hungarian is spoken in some Slovak villages in Hungary. There is already a university in Japan, yet large numbers come to Berlin, Vienna, Paris, London, etc., to attend higher-level schools. I met not just one merchant who speaks German perfectly and graduated from the commercial academy in Vienna. Despite all this, the moral decay defies all imagination; whether this was brought about by European influences or stems from ancient times, I cannot explain. We stayed in Yokohama for twenty-one days, which was enough time for us to have a good time spending all the dollars we had saved up. On August 4, 1888, we weighed anchor and began our journey back home."[177]

1890

In the early 1890s, Japan's new opportunities drew their fair share of swindlers and fraudsters – and, perhaps unsurprisingly, one of them was Hungarian. János Vadona, a Hungarian traveler, reported on this countryman's stunts in his travelogue:

"*The subtle scoundrel: Grün the Jew. In Australia: Baron Zöldi; in North America: Görgényi; in Southeast Asia: Arthur. I heard rumors about his affairs in Hong Kong, but I have forgotten the details. In Shanghai, he pocketed a few hundred dollars from our compatriot, the good old General Stein, who was representing the United States of America at the time. The old gentleman paid dearly for the pleasure of being visited by a fellow Hungarian. In Kobe, he stayed at a French restaurant for a month; he paid for one week and left the rest – 70 yen – unpaid. In Yokohama, Gustav Kreitner knows the most about him. He wanted to order a piano from Bösendorfer, but fortunately he did not, for the instrument would have cost a fortune and never arrived. He talked about his great inheritance and*

[177] Hörömpő Elek: *Másfél év tengeren. Jegyzetek keleti utazásomból*. (manuscript) Translated by the Author.

claimed to be the owner of a large hotel in Vienna – though that hotel is actually owned by Frohner. He also claimed to have won a large prize for successfully eradicating phylloxera in Normandy, to which someone remarked, "There are no vineyards in Normandy." When Count Béla Széchenyi was mentioned, he exclaimed, "Oh, Béla!" In Tokyo, he even took a carriage ride with the Japanese foreign minister and his wife in the minister's carriage. (...) And so on."[178]

Contemporary reports mention another Hungarian swindler. János Bohus (?–?) was in Japan in the late 1890s. Formerly a valet in Hungary, he stole money from his master and fled to Asia. In Japan, he presented himself as a Hungarian magnate and allegedly later committed suicide in Siam. Shortly before his death, he had been in contact with a Yokohama-based firm, '*Portofée and Co.*', on whose behalf he advertised in the Hungarian press for young and beautiful women to work as cashiers. It later emerged that the company did not exist in Yokohama, and Bohus was most likely involved in trafficking women.[179]

Karola Kuhn (?–?) lived in Japan from the 1890s until 1907, when she returned to Hungary to marry Mór Gellért, CEO of the Savings and Credit Union for private officials.[180]

János Torma (1855–1916), a veterinarian at a Hungarian stud farm, embarked on a remarkable journey when, on October 17, 1889, he was entrusted with accompanying three Arabian stallions purchased by the Japanese government all the way to Tokyo – without the assistance of any transport personnel. According to records, he arrived in Tokyo on **January** 25, 1890, and departed for Mezőhegyes on February 2, reaching his destination on April 17.[181] Torma was again entrusted with accompanying stallions during subsequent Japanese horse purchases (between 1897 and 1901), but on those occasions he did not travel all the way to Japan, accompanying the horses only as far as the port of Antwerp. He met two other Hungarians in Japan, '*J. Halka*' and '*Rosenberg*', but no detailed information about them is available. However, we know the

[178] Vadona János: *Az öt világrészből*. Bp., Hornyánszky, 1893. pp. 631-632. Translated by the Author.
[179] Pesti Napló, 1899-08-18 / 228. Szám; Budapesti Hírlap, 1897-04-10 / 100. szám
[180] Ország-Világ, 1907-06-16 / 24. szám p. 519.
[181] Szinnyei József: *Magyar írók élete és munkái*; Dr. Hecker Walter: *A Bábolnai Arab Ménes*. Magyarországi Arablótenyésztők Egyesülete, 2014., p. 90.

details of Torma's journey from his diary.[182] On November 22, 1889, the ship set sail with the horses, during which he met another Hungarian, Rosenberg. On January 21, they reached the Japanese coast at Nagasaki. He remained on board with the horses. While there, he bought three tortoiseshell combs, a breastplate and pendant, a tobacco box, and five landscape paintings of Nagasaki from Japanese merchants on the ship. On January 23, they reached Kobe, and on January 25, Yokohama. Upon arrival in Yokohama, Torma immediately hurried to the Lloyd agency, which had already been informed of his arrival. There he met with economic director Niiyama, chief stable master Magaki, and a secretary of Count Fujinami, who then accompanied him back to the ship. The Japanese were amazed to see the horses in such good condition after the hardships of the journey. That evening, he dined with Magaki at the Grand Hotel, joined by Rosenberg, who was staying at a German hotel called *Hufker* (?). On the afternoon of January 26, Count Fujinami, the chief equerry, arrived to inspect the horses and expressed his satisfaction with their condition. Rosenberg interpreted, and afterward both men were invited to lunch with the count, where Magaki and Niiyama were also present. The menu consisted of roast meat and champagne. Count Fujinami personally thanked them for their efforts, noting that although horses had been imported from Europe before, none had arrived in such good condition. Later, at the hotel, Torma met another Hungarian, Komor (one of the managers of the Kuhn&Komor curio shop), who joined him and Rosenberg on an excursion. They explored the city, paid a visit to a merchant selling Japanese curios, and went to a theater. On January 27, the horses were loaded onto a dedicated train and transported from Yokohama to Tokyo, where they received a grand reception from the director of the imperial stables. Driven directly to the royal stables, they were shown around by the chief stable master before being taken on a carriage ride around the imperial palace with the director. At the court stables, they were introduced to Count Enami, who had served as attaché at the Japanese embassy in Berlin for 12 years. Magaki had also lived in Vienna for a short time and worked at the embassy in Paris; he knew only French and translated between Torma and Japanese officials. On January 28, they visited the imperial court stables and

[182] The handwritten diary of János Torma is owned by the Torma family, namely Dr. Mária Torma (granddaughter of János Torma) and her nephew, Tamás Torma (great-grandson of János Torma).

carriage houses with Niiyama, where they saw about 100 horse-drawn carriages, including the ceremonial ones used by the emperor, as well as the tack room. There were 200 horses in the stables – mostly small, undemanding animals. Torma noted that earlier Hungarian imports were likely arranged by people with little knowledge of horses, since the animals in the stable were of poor quality. In contrast, he believed that the three stallions he delivered from Bábolna were suitable for founding a breeding program. Still, he observed a problem: three stallions were insignificant compared to the more than 500 mares in the two Japanese stud farms where they were to be sent. Torma regretted that he never had the chance to see the Japanese imperial couple. On the morning of January 29, he visited the Academy of Economics and Forestry; in the afternoon, the Japanese livestock manager came to haggle over his salary, which put him in a very bad mood. A German teacher at the academy told him that the so-called original Japanese horses he had been shown were in fact crossbreeds, partly with Hungarian stock imported earlier. On January 30, Torma took a long walk in Tokyo. He noted that the restaurant where he was staying was the only one in the city furnished in European style. That same day, he bought gifts: toys for his daughter, as well as 28 Japanese pipes, 12 matchboxes, five inkwells, an ashtray, a paperweight, five photo frames, small trinkets, paper goods, pictures depicting women's swords, and matches. Niiyama also gave him $50 on behalf of the emperor, and all his bills to that point were paid. On February 1, Torma spent the day with Rosenberg. That day, a Hungarian named Halka[183] visited him at his lodgings. At 6 a.m. on February 2, they left Yokohama. On February 5, the ship was at Shimonoseki; on the 6th, they reached Nagasaki, and from there sailed back to Europe. Interestingly, alongside the mainly professional diary entries, Torma devoted considerable space to his observations about Japanese women.

Between **March** and August, Austrian piano virtuoso Louise Schuller (?–?) performed concerts with flutist Adolf Terschák (1832-1901). There are some uncertainties about Terschak's identity, but it is certain that he was born in Prague, and by the age of seven he was already living in Nagyszeben (now Sibiu, Romania) with his parents and had begun his flute studies there. Some assume that at least one of his

[183] he may have been an Austro-Hungarian police superintendent in Tianjin

parents (or grandparents) may have had Hungarian roots or ties to this region.[184] An article from September 1890 recounts the highlight of their concert tour:

> "*Since March, flute virtuoso Adolf Terschak and pianist Lujza Schuller, who have been staying in the Japanese capital, have been performing at a concert organized by the Japanese Music Society. They were so well received that the Emperor's Master of Ceremonies, Marquis Nabesima, and the Imperial Music Academy invited them to perform at the Imperial Palace. They therefore contacted the head of the artists of the Imperial Music Academy, Mr. Adolf Ditrich, a former student of the Vienna Conservatory, who undertook to organize the concert. On August 1, the grand court concert was held in the new imperial palace in the presence of the emperor, the empress, the princes and princesses staying in Yeddo, and the entire court – about 100 people. The ornate concert hall – the "Hall of 1000 Flowers" – successfully blends Japanese architectural style with European comfort. The hall owes its name to its rich Japanese wood and roof decorations, which consist mainly of golden flowers. The furnishings, in keeping with the style, are of German origin, and the magnificent Steinway piano is decorated in Japanese style to match the decorations. The imperial music hall had an enchanting effect. (...) Terschak played three of his own compositions on the flute, followed by Dittrich playing pieces by Vieuxtemps, Raff, and Hauser, and finally Mrs. Schuller played pieces by Liszt and Wallace. The concert lasted over an hour. The emperor expressed his gratitude to the artists through his chief master of ceremonies. Mr. Terschak and Mrs. Schuller received substantial financial reward, while Dittrich, who is in the Japanese civil service, received a silver goblet bearing the imperial coat of arms.*"[185]

Between **March** 4, 1890, and May 7, 1892, Emil Némethy (1867–1943) served as the chief engineer at the *Fuji Paper Company* (later known as 王子製紙社). According to contemporary documents, he was sent to Japan from the *Piette von Rivage* paper mill in Pilsen to introduce European paper manufacturing techniques. After his return,

[184] https://www.parlando.hu/2020/2020-3/Czeloth-Csetenyi_Gyula.pdf (accessed: 2026 June)
[185] Pesti Hírlap, 1890-09-16.

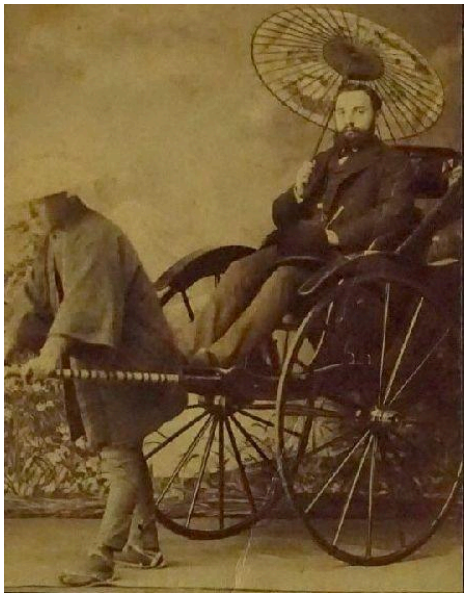
he became the director of the *Arad Paper Mill*. His work in Japan came to light through a photo album that arrived at the *Ferenc Hopp Museum* in 2011.[186] Némethy's connection with Japan begins with the establishment of the Fuji Paper Co.'s first factory, which began operations in January 1890. The plan was to start producing sulfite pulp (a chemically processed pulp made by treating wood chips with sulfurous acid and bisulfite, yielding stronger, higher-quality fibers for fine paper) and ground pulp (mechanically ground wood fibers, cheaper to produce but coarser and less durable) as soon as possible. Nevertheless, significant delays arose during implementation. Although the company became the first in Japan to successfully produce ground pulp in March 1890, they encountered serious difficulties with sulfite pulp production. As a result, they fell far behind schedule and did not manage to begin production until the end of Meiji 25 (1892). There were two main problems: first, they were using new American machinery; second, for reasons unknown, they had hired a materials engineer who was unfamiliar with such equipment. This was Emil Némethy (rendered in Japanese as エメル・ネメチー), who had only just graduated from school. (Perhaps it was due to international interest in one of his early inventions that Némethy was noticed and invited to Japan. Némethy began his career at a paper factory in Pilsen, which produced high-quality products known even in Japan and attracted the attention of those seeking to import advanced technology and invite experts. This was likely the second reason he was selected.) Némethy assumed his position in March 1890 and immediately began working at the sulfite plant. When he got to the "acid tower" (製薬塔, also called an acid preparation tower), progress was far slower than expected. By October of Meiji 24 (1891), the work was still unfinished, raising doubts among the management. While they acknowledged his dedication and effort, they concluded that his performance did not justify his high salary. In response, Némethy insisted that since he had traveled all the way to distant Japan, he could not return home without completing his assignment. He asked for permission to finish the work. After two years of labor and numerous setbacks, he finally submitted his completed plans to management on May 1, Meiji 25 (1892). Construction could at last begin, resolving one of the factory's major obstacles.

[186] In 2011, Emil Némethy's great-grandson visited the Hopp Ferenc Museum of East Asian Art in Budapest, and offered to sell the album containing Emil Némethy's photo collection, which was in his possession.

Sources preserve a personal anecdote: a former colleague remembered Némethy as an avid snake enthusiast. He would catch snakes with local children – paying 5 sen per specimen – keeping the rare or unusual ones as pets while releasing the more common types back into the wild. He fed his snakes raw eggs, and at times the released specimens startled unsuspecting visitors in his garden. Némethy lived with a Japanese woman – probably in a temporary marriage, which was common in Japan at the time – who was often terrified by his hobby; otherwise, he was remembered by his colleagues as a gentle and kind man.[187] What is remarkable about Némethy is that he worked in the paper and pulp industry for 44 years, during which he obtained 10 foreign patents and 3 Hungarian patents for his technological innovations. One of his inventions was submitted to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's patent office on November 22, 1890, from Tokyo via the Palm agency in Vienna, under the title "*Apparat zur Herstellung von Kochlauge für Sulfitcellulosefabriken*" (*Apparatus for the production of caustic soda for sulfite cellulose factories*). The patent expired on April 24, 1892, due to non-payment of fees. In the spring of 1891, Némethy began contributing to *Papier-Zeitung* with an article on Japanese paper manufacturing, which developed into a five-part series.[188] He introduced Japan's modernization, emphasizing the central role of paper in Japanese daily life – from writing and the arts to household uses like paper windows and sliding panels. He enthusiastically described customs unfamiliar to Europe, such as paper handkerchiefs and children's paper kites, highlighting the indispensability of paper in Japanese culture. He discussed the main raw materials for Japanese paper, and recounted his early work at a factory in Omiya, where he learned papermaking techniques for Fuji Paper Co., located near Mount Fuji. After returning from Japan, Némethy married Anne Schneider in Pilsen on November 12, 1892. His family later moved from Pilsen to Pauschwitz in Saxony, where Némethy took a well-paid management position at a newly established paper factory. After living there for several years, the Némethy family moved to Arad (now in Romania), where the head of the family became director of the newly established Hungarian straw paper factory (*Első*

[187] 成田潔英『王子製紙社史』王子製紙社史編纂所 Tokyo, 1956, p. 303-307.
[188] Papier-Zeitung, XVI. Jahrg. 1891.; Papier-Zeitung, XVII. Jahrg. 1892.

Magyar Szalmaanyag-Gyár). Founded in 1896 and operating until 1926, it was the only straw paper manufacturer in Hungary.[189]



Emil Némethy in Japan with his Japanese wife and in a rickshaw (private collection)

[189] Tószegi Zsuzsanna: *Némethy Emil papír- és cellulózipari tevékenysége*. In: Iparjogvédelmi és Szerzői Jogi Szemle 13. (123.) Évf. 5. Szám, 2018. október. pp. 41-80.

1891

Between **August** and December, Géza Mailáth traveled to Japan with his brother László. After arriving in Nagasaki, they proceeded to Kobe and took trips to Osaka, Kyoto, and Tokyo, also visiting Otsu and Hakone along the way. On August 28, 1891, they climbed Mount Fuji with Gustav Kreitner, the Austrian consul in Yokohama.[190]

Among civilian travelers, János Vadona (?-?), a landowner from Fiume, was the first to publish an extensive account in 1893, a significant portion of which concerned Japan.[191] In his book, he described in detail his months-long visit to the country, which took place between **September** 1891 and January 1892. From Vadona's travelogue, we learn that József Thunhart (?-?), a Budapest-based engineer and inventor, was also in Japan at the same time, and the two men met during their travels. Unfortunately, no further details about Thunhart's journey have been discovered so far.

1892

Jenő Jenovay (?-?), a naval officer and music teacher, may have visited Japan between 1892 and 1894 – perhaps twice, and possibly a third time around 1904. He served in the navy of the Monarchy and later described his travels in his book *Around the World by Sail* (1906), though he gave no exact dates. According to an article, he entered into a temporary marriage with a Japanese woman[192] – a detail discreetly omitted from his travelogue. A Japanese researcher, Toru Senga has noted this omission: while a contemporary article states that Jenovay went from Yokohama to Tokyo with *his geisha,* in his book the *geisha* was replaced with "*a Japanese official who spoke German quite well*".[193] Apparently, the geisha also served as his tour guide:

> "*The next day, my geisha named Monkey and I walked the streets of Tokyo as husband and wife; the Japanese capital is about an hour's journey from Yokohama. Monkey was courteous and guided me with keen attention to all the sights of interest to a foreigner. With her help, I had the opportunity to see the*

[190] Mervay Mátyás: *Gróf Mailáth István Géza élete*. Szakdolgozat, 2012. pp. 8-16.
[191] Vadona János: *Az öt világrészből - százezer mértföld vizen és szárazon. Három év, hét és fél hóra terjedt utazás tollrajza*. Budapest, 1893. Hornyánszky Viktor Könyvnyomdája
[192] "*He also entered into a temporary marriage with a woman named 'Monkey', with whom he went on a trip from Yokohama to Tokyo.*" Magyarország, 1906-12-21 / 308. szám
[193] Senga Toru: *A geisa és a gésa szóalakok a japán nyelvtörténet tükrében*. In: Magyar nyelv. - 102. (2006) 3. , pp. 299-307.; Jenovay Jenő: *Vitorlákkal a Föld Körül*, 1906. p. 139.

Mikado's palace, the parliament, the university, foreign embassies, theaters, temples, factories producing silk fabrics and decorative items, a giant statue of Buddha, archery ranges, and military training grounds…"[194]

Jenovay's travel notes offer a unique glimpse into the experience of arriving in Japan aboard an Austro-Hungarian naval vessel.

"*(...) when our ship arrived at the Japanese naval port of Nagasaki, we were greeted by a naval band set up on the deck of a Japanese warship anchored there, playing a Viennese piece, the popular march titled "Wien bleibt Wien".*"[195]

Later, he went on to describe the arrival in Yokohama:

"*...a crowd of natives swarmed our ship – men and women alike, each carrying a box or small crate filled with goods under their arms. In an instant, the deck was abuzz with eager anticipation. Every conceivable item was laid out here: coffee, tea, and mocha sets made of Chinese porcelain, exquisite Japanese and Chinese vases, ornate Japanese boxes, wall hangings, cushions, and Spanish screens artistically embroidered with silk, old weapons, toiletries, decorative items made of paper, tea, pieces of ink, and countless other items piled up in incredible quantities. The ranks of the vendors were rounded out by laundresses, tattoo artists, tailors, and shoemakers. (...) Amid the crowd of Japanese passengers flooding the deck, a European man dressed in white stands out and walks toward us, greeting us. After introducing himself, he hands us a few promotional cards, on which, in bilingual text – in German and in Hungarian lines composed with scandalous spelling and style – Ö. Fuchs, the restaurateur at the Settlement House with a Viennese kitchen (the Hungarian text mentions authentic Hungarian cuisine), whose premises he recommends to the esteemed locals for their kind patronage, where he offers daily concerts for the entertainment of the interested public. The next day, after touring the city and as dinnertime approached, we sought out Mr. Fuchs's establishment. The Settlement House was quite close by. We went inside. We found ourselves in a large hall filled with sailors of various nationalities, with drunken faces and loud*

[194] Pesti Napló, 1904-02-20. Jenovay Jenő: *Japáni apróságok*
[195] Ország-Világ, 1905-03-05.

voices, and thick clouds of smoke, in one corner of which, in front of a piano, sat a European woman – the innkeeper's wife – in a pink negligee cut so low as to be indecent, singing a few old Hungarian songs with awkward effort and with the details distorted, likely at the request of the few Hungarian sailors present. Standing in the doorway, we watched the proceedings unfolding before us. Disappointed in our expectations, we hurried to leave the room."[196]

In **June**, ship's doctor Ferenc Gáspár and sailor Lajos Krecsmári reached Japan aboard the corvette *Zrínyi*. For details of the voyage, see Chapter Two.

1893

János Bolle (?-?), director of the Imperial and Royal Agricultural and Chemical Experimental Station in Görz (now: Gorizia, Italy), journeyed to Japan. In 1899, Bolle published a study on silkworm farming in Japan, supported by the Imperial and Royal Ministry of Agriculture. With their backing, Bolle spent a year in 1893 studying Japanese silkworm breeding, with a particular focus on the various diseases that affect silkworms. During his study trip, he made a trip to several major cities[197] and brought back specimens of a Japanese silkworm species to the research station for cross-breeding purposes. While in Japan, Bolle was accompanied throughout by Chūjirō Sasaki (佐々木忠次郎), a professor at the Tokyo School of Agriculture and Forestry (東京農林学校), and together they explored Japan's major sericulture regions.[198] (They had been good friends ever since Sasaki studied sericulture in Austria.) In the introduction to his study, Bolle wrote the following about his trip: "*Everywhere in Japan, I was met with the warmest welcome and courtesy that one would expect from a refined and cultured people. All those with whom I came into contact showed the greatest interest in the purpose of my studies and offered assistance without which I could hardly have fulfilled my task.*"[199] Bolle made significant contributions to presenting the results of Japanese silkworm breeding in Hungary, not only through his detailed, professionally compiled

[196] Pesti Napló, 1904-02-20. Jenovay Jenő: *Japáni apróságok*
[197] Fukushima, Yanagawa, Kakeda, Tomioka, Ueda, Shiojiri, Nagano, Sendagaya, Atsumi, Gori, Shizuoka, Awano, Nagoya, Kyoto
[198] 東京日日新聞, Meiji 26. 5th Month 18. The article mentions Bolle as "ボルレー博士".
[199] Bolle János: *A selyemtenyésztés Japánban.* A Földmivelésügyi M. Kir. Minister Kiadványai 2. szám, 1899. p. 8.

study but also by purchasing equipment. He donated items to the Agricultural Museum in Budapest, including a so-called “common Japanese silk reel”, and exhibited many other tools used by the Japanese in silkworm breeding at the research station he managed. Bolle was the only Hungarian expert to be awarded two Japanese state honors.

From early **August** to September, Franz Ferdinand was in Japan, accompanied by Ferenc Reményi (1868–1940), a naval lieutenant and military journalist; Gyula Prónay of Tótpróna and Blatnyica (1860–1933), a member of the heir to the throne’s immediate staff, first lieutenant in the 11th Hussar Regiment, and imperial and royal chamberlain; Jenő Mallinárich (?–?) naval ensign, and István Pelczéder (?–?) naval officer. Details of the trip can be found in Chapter Two.

1895

Count Rudolf Festetics (Count Festetics de Tolna Rodolphe, 1865–1943) sailed around the world between 1893 and 1900, visiting Japan in July 1895, May 1896, and July 1897 – and possibly again in 1900.[200] He traveled aboard his yacht, the Tolna, accompanied by his wife, Eila Haggin, who, exhausted by the journey and often in conflict with her husband, would occasionally leave him to visit her mother.

> “*(...) the Countess has been back in San Francisco since. That was last year, and on that occasion the Countess left the Tolna and the Count in Yokohama while she made a run to New York to visit her mother. From Manila they went to Nagasaki, and there the Countess left the yacht and going to Yokohama took passage for San Francisco. After a stay of a month or so with her mother in New York she rejoined her husband on the Tolna, and they started once more for the Southern Seas.*”[201]

His adventure came to an end on February 11, 1900, on the island of Minicoy in the Maldives. He had his boat and cargo towed back to Vienna, after which he set about writing the account of his voyage. This was published as a two-volume work: *Chez les Cannibales. Huit ans de croisière dans l’Océan Pacifique à bord du yacht “Le Tolna”*

[200] Pesti Napló, 1900. 11. 11., 310. szám; Pécsi Közlöny, 1902-12-12 / 221. szám p. 4.
[201] San Francisco Call, Volume 86, Number 73, 12 August 1899

(Paris: Librairie Plon, 1903) and *Vers l'écueil de Minicoy, après huit ans dans l'océan Pacifique et Indien à bord du yacht "Le Tolna"* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1904). He also donated the vast majority of his objects – about 1,600 pieces – to the National Museum in Budapest. About one hundred objects collected by Count Festetics de Tolna are now preserved at the Natural History Museum of La Rochelle. (Most of these pieces entered the museum's collections in the 1920s and 1930s.)[202]

1897

In **February**, Baron Endre Kemény (1845–1898), a member of parliament, and his close friend Antal Medico Del (1853–1916) visited Japan. The exact duration of their trip to Japan – the "land of miracles", as Kemény described it – is currently unknown. They likely embarked on their East Asian journey because Kemény had lost his wife in 1896, which affected his mood and health, and only a long journey could serve as a remedy for his mental anguish. According to the *Vasárnapi Újság* newspaper, Antal Medico Del may have already gone to Japan in 1894, making this his second trip.[203] Endre Kemény sent letters about their journey to *Vasárnapi Újság*, dated February 1897. These letters paint a vivid picture of an interesting trip. (They may have met the Japanese emperor, but this information has not been confirmed.) Kemény examines Japanese society and life from almost every angle in his letters. Of course, Japanese women made a particular impression on him: "*They are so small that we almost see them as children, and they are always smiling, which suits them very well. Besides, there is something childishly fresh about the entire Japanese people.*"[204] He also greatly admired Japanese cleanliness, almost fearing that he might soil something with every movement. He regarded Japan's cottage industry and agriculture, as well as its military and commercial shipbuilding, as highly developed. He noted the rapid growth of manufacturing and the well-equipped University of Tokyo. Kemény noted that Japan was destined to become the "England of Asia", and that it was encouraging to see that the Japanese were the only Asian people who had not become enslaved. Kemény and his friend undertook a journey to several cities and villages, finding the cities "*annoyingly uniform*" and the

[202] http://www.alienor.org/collections-des-musees/fiche-objet-155764-ornement-de-danse (accessed: 2025 Sept.)
[203] *Magyar utazók Japánban*. Vasárnapi Újság, 1897. 44. évf. 11. szám, március 14., p. 173-174.
[204] *Levelek Kelet-Ázsiából IV*., Vasárnapi Újság, 1897. 44. évf., 15. szám, április 11., p. 231.

villages like "*settlements laid out from a toy shop*".[205] After a seventeen-and-a-half-hour journey from Osaka, they arrived in Yokohama, somewhat annoyed by the lack of scenic views along the way. During their travels, they went to Kobe, Nara, Kyoto, and Tokyo. In Kyoto, they attended the funeral of the late Japanese Empress on the morning of February 3.[206] Their 'headquarters' was in Yokohama, where they met with the Austro-Hungarian acting consul, Charles Bernauer, and the interpreter then employed at the consulate. Kemény writes the following about the interpreter: "*There is a young Japanese employee at the Austro-Hungarian consulate. He studied in Germany. He speaks German beautifully and is very well educated. It couldn't be any other way. He was born in Japan and studied in Europe. He educated himself by traveling and studying.*"[207] He makes two harsh criticisms of the Japanese: the spread of excessive militarism and the increase in the number of civil servants:

> "*Another major flaw has also been adopted from Europe. Every young person with even a modicum of education wants to become a civil servant, just like in Hungary. This will be detrimental to industry and, to a considerable extent, to the spirit of entrepreneurship. It diminishes the influence of independent thinkers.*"[208]

They also watched a military exercise:

> "*We saw infantry training in Tokyo. They look good, lively, moving evenly. (...) but one cannot help feeling a certain comical effect: they are so small. However, this hardly matters with today's weapons. (...) We also saw hussars. The Japanese could imitate everything, but not the hussar. They are dressed in Hungarian-style frogged uniforms, which would be a delight to look at, if they were hussars: but they are not. Their horses are poor, and they cannot ride.*"[209]

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[205] *Levelek Kelet-Ázsiából VI*., Vasárnapi Újság, 1897. 44. évf., 16. szám, április 18., p. 251.
[206] This refers to the funeral ceremonies for Empress Dowager Eishō (consort of Emperor Kōmei), who died on January 11, 1897. The official funeral was held in Kyoto on February 7, 1897, though Kemény may have witnessed related mourning rituals or preparatory ceremonies on February 3.
[207] *Levelek Kelet-Ázsiából VI*., Vasárnapi Újság, 1897. 44. évf., 16. szám, április 18., p. 251. Translated by the Author.
[208] *Levelek Kelet-Ázsiából VI*., Vasárnapi Újság, 1897. 44. évf., 16. szám, április 18., p. 251. Translated by the Author.
[209] *Levelek Kelet-Ázsiából VI*., Vasárnapi Újság, 1897. 44. évf., 16. szám, április 18., p. 251. Translated by the Author.

In **November**, Lajos Fanzler (1856–1919) arrived in Japan, where he spent about twenty days. A doctor who described himself as a globetrotter, he embarked on his great journey out of a desire for adventure. He eventually found himself in Hamburg as a ship's doctor, and since he already had experience as an assistant physician in Germany, he was hired. Although he received no salary for his service as ship's doctor, in return he was able to travel without cost to distant countries such as India, China, and Japan. The journey lasted from September 10, 1897, to January 30, 1898, aboard a German ship called *Thekla*. He arrived in Japan on November 12, 1897, and the ship remained in the ports of Yokohama and Kobe-Hyogo for ten days each. His travel diary was published in serial form in issues 15–18 of *Orvosi Hetilap (Medical Weekly)* in 1898, with the section on Japan comprising the final part of the series. Fanzler skillfully used his title of ship's doctor to gain easy access to Tokyo Imperial University, where, as a visitor, he closely examined the institution, its standard of education, and the classes. He was particularly interested in matters related to his profession and medical training.

1898

American Hungarian emigrants also made their way to Japan, among them Lajos Ottofy (1860–1939). Born in Budapest, Ottofy emigrated with his family to Baltimore in 1874. He studied dentistry in America and opened his own practice in Chicago in 1888. He later taught at the University of Chicago and served as president of the American Dental Association. In 1893, he met a Japanese dentist at the World's Fair in Chicago, which inspired him to travel to Japan. Five years later, in **June** 1898, he arrived in Yokohama, where he practiced dentistry for two years. Alongside his work, he published studies on the state of Japanese dentistry in American journals. In 1900, he moved to Manila in the Philippines, where he remained for about twenty years. His work left a lasting mark on Japanese dentistry.[210]

[210] Source: http://www.icd-japan.gr.jp/gaiyou/g_enkaku.asp (accessed: 2018 May); Lajos Ottofy co-founded the International College of Dentists (ICD) with Japanese dentist Tsurukichi Okumura in 1920. In recognition of their contributions, the ICD established the Ottofy–Okumura Award, the highest honor for a Fellow, which acknowledges extraordinary lifetime service to the organization.

On **November** 28, 1898, Austro-Hungarian consul Flesch hosted Gusztáv Géza Osztroluczky (1869–1952), a landowner from Trenčín County (today: Trencsén in Slovakia), in Yokohama.[211]

1899

Vilmos Mühle Jr. (?–?), the son of a renowned rose gardener from Temesvár (now: Timișoara in Romania), may have visited Japan between 1899–1900. In **September** 1899, he wrote a short letter from Yokohama to the *Kertészeti Lapok*,[212] and he appeared in a photograph taken in Yokohama in October 1900 with the staff of the *L. Boehmer & Co.*[213] flower bulb shipping company.[214] He went to Japan to visit Japanese seed suppliers to ensure he could procure the seeds and flower bulbs his company required.[215] Vilmos Mühle Jr. also traveled to Mexico, California, and China. He returned home ill and died at the age of 27. Árpád Mühle, Vilmos's other son who took over the company, also traveled to Japan, although the date of his visit is unknown.[216] *Mühle Vilmos's Horticultural Bulletin (Mühle Vilmos Kertészeti Értesítője)* was published in 1900 to mark the company's 25th anniversary and includes a description of Vilmos Mühle Jr.'s studies of Japanese horticulture.[217] This trip involved an interesting discovery. Vilmos Mühle Jr. was invited to Yokohama by Peter Barr, a Scottish gardener who was staying there at the time and was known as the "daffodil king".[218] Together,

[211] Pesti Hírlap, 1899. jan. 3. 3. szám, p. 59.
[212] Kertészeti Lapok, 1900 Január
[213] L. Boehmer & Co., founded in Yokohama in 1882 by German-American agronomist Louis Boehmer, was the only European nursery in Japan at the time. The firm specialized in exporting Japanese plants – including bonsai (then termed "*Japanese Dwarfed Trees*"), lilies, irises, and ornamental shrubs – to Europe and North America. The company was renowned for its beautifully illustrated English-language catalogs, which included detailed horticultural information and helped popularize Japanese flora and bonsai in the Western world.
[214] *Kertészeti Lapok*, 1901. december, 12. szám, pp. 317-318.
[215] Kertészeti lapok 1900. Január / 1. szám
[216] Ország-Világ, 1908-10-18 / 42. szám
[217] Pesti Hírlap, 1900-01-21 / 20. szám
[218] Peter Barr (1826–1909) was a nurseryman and merchant, best known for his work with daffodils. He earned the nickname 'The Daffodil King' for his significant contributions to the cultivation and popularization of daffodils. Barr's efforts in breeding and promoting daffodils transformed the British landscape, making them a staple in gardens and parks across Britain.

they embarked on a study trip in Japan, where they discovered a 2-meter flowering plant, *Dolichos giganteus*[219], which they named ‘Sunlight’.[220]

Packaging of Japanese lily bulbs. The photograph was taken in October 1900 in Yokohama, Vilmos Mühle Jr. is second to the right of the lady in the hat. (Kertészeti lapok 1901. December / 12. szám)

1900

Ferenc Gáspár (1861-1923), a ship's doctor, spent some time in Japan for the second time in the early 1900s.

Apostolic missionary Ernő Szeghy (1872–1952) served as tutor to the child of imperial and royal minister Béla Ambró in Japan between 1900 and 1903.

Károly Gubányi (1867–1935) was a Hungarian railway engineer, geographical explorer, and writer. In 1896, he traveled to Manchuria and participated in the construction of the Manchurian railway, after which he worked on the construction of the port of Vladivostok. He visited Japan between **September** 20 and the first half of November 1900. Our knowledge of his journey comes from letters he wrote to his sister.

[219] *Dolichos giganteus* is an outdated scientific name for a plant species now classified as *Mucuna gigantea*. This species is a large, woody, twining climber belonging to the legume family (Fabaceae).
[220] Kertészeti lapok 1902. Január / 1. szám

He traveled from China to Japan on a Norddeutscher Lloyd ship and stayed at the Grand Hotel in Yokohama. While in Yokohama, he met Szigfrid Komor and Kuhn, the managers of the Kuhn and Komor curio shop, who invited him to a Hungarian lunch. During the meal, he was served fish in paprika sauce, stuffed cabbage, and cottage cheese strudel. Gubányi wrote of their hospitality: "*They live in a magnificent villa in one of the most beautiful parts of Yokohama. Their sumptuous salon is filled with Japanese wonders, and they are gracious hosts*". He made a visit to Tokyo, Kyoto, Kobe, and Nagasaki.[221]

Andor Eberstärk (?-?) was a sailor from Szabadka (today Subotica, in northern Serbia) who served on the Monarchy's ship Maria Theresia. He was in Beijing in 1900 during the suppression of the Boxer Rebellion. He arrived in Japan when the ship spent the winter there at the end of 1900 and the beginning of 1901. The exact details of his journey are unknown; only a few brief notes about his time in Japan appeared in a local Hungarian newspaper:

> "*Our whole job is to go back and forth to pass the time*"; "*We spent two months in Japan, in that beautiful country. We visited Yokohama, Kobe, and Nagasaki, all of which are beautiful places, like a country of dwarfs.*"[222]

1901

The writer Ottília Márkus Mrs. Kornél Kozmutza (Kozmutza Kornélné Márkus Ottília) (1873-1951) conducted a tour of Japan around 1901-1902, and reported on her trip in a series of newspaper articles. A contemporary article sheds light on this trip: according to the article, Minister Gyula Wlassics, who served as Hungary's Minister of Religion and Education from 1895 to 1903, commissioned her at the time to conduct ethnographic research in Japan. She is said to have sent material to the Hungarian Museum of Ethnography.[223]

Béla Rakovszky (1860–1916), diplomat and consul, was commissioned by the Foreign Ministry of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the spring of 1900 to board the covered corvette *Donau* and sail along the western coast of South America in order to

[221] Budapesti Hírlap, 1901-12-25. Translated by the Author.
[222] Bácskai Hírlap, 1901 április 12. Translated by the Author.
[223] Tolnai Világlapja, 1911-10-01.; PIM Kézirattár, V. 4132/336, V. 4132/357., V. 4132/856/57., V. 4132/859/54-55

familiarize himself with the political relations as well as the industrial, agricultural, and commercial conditions of the states in the region. During this mission, Rakovszky made a detour to Japan at the end of **March** and the beginning of April 1901. Although the exact date of his arrival is unknown, it is certain that he remained there until May 9, when he departed from the port of Kobe for Hong Kong. His probable route through Japan was Yokohama – Tokyo – Kamakura – Enoshima – Nikko – Miyanoshita – Atami – Yokohama – Kyoto – Moji – Kobe. Rakovszky's diary records numerous interesting encounters. He visited Miksa Kutschera, the Consul of the Monarchy, with whom he spent almost every day. He took several walks in Yokohama accompanied by Kutschera and the Belgian consul. In Tokyo, he met the Austro-Hungarian minister, Béla Ambró Adamóci. In the capital, he usually hired an interpreter named *Ishigami* as a guide, though he held a very poor opinion of him, noting that "*despite his stupidity, he was a great scoundrel and a deceiver*".[224]

1902

During their travels around the world, painter Ödön János Lechner (1874–1910) and his wife traveled across Japan, where they met Antal Elked, a Hungarian banker in Kobe, and his Japanese wife (the exact date of the trip is unknown).[225] The journey to Japan had a significant impact on Lechner's artistic development.

Antal Elked (1873–1942; his name also occurs in other variants: Antoine/Anthony/Anton Elked) first arrived in Shanghai in 1899 to work for the Russo-Chinese Bank, which had been founded in 1895 to provide French-Russian loans to China after the Sino-Japanese War. In 1902, he was transferred to Kobe as deputy branch manager, and in 1905 he moved to Yokohama to continue in the same position. While in Japan, Elked met his future wife, Mitsuko Fukutani or Mitsu Elked (?-?), with whom he later helped promote figure skating in the country. Their daughter also went on to become a figure skater.[226]

[224] Béla Rakovszky's handwritten diary from 1901, later transcribed on a typewriter, p. 108. ; Rakovszky-hagyaték, Történeti Dokumentációs Leltár (TDL), Hansági Múzeum

[225] Evidence of the meeting can be found in Antal Elked's family photo album, which is owned by Sándor Kiss. Kiss Sándor: *Magyarok, akik szerették Japánt. Első rész* (manuscript), Budapest, Magyar-Japán Gazdasági Klub, 2013., p. 105.

[226] Kiss Sándor: *Magyarok, akik szerették Japánt. Első rész* (manuscript), Budapest, Magyar-Japán Gazdasági Klub, 2013., pp. 103-104.

In the same year, Jób Kompolthy (1879–1938), a globetrotting sailor, traveled to Japan aboard the Austrian Lloyd steamer Silesia to take up a naval officer post in Yokohama. Although his plan ultimately fell through, he was able to explore Tokyo before leaving Japan. Kompolthy later became a provincial postmaster in China and wrote several books about his ten-year stay there.

In mid-**December**, Count Péter Vay (1863–1948) visited Japan, where he was received by the Japanese emperor and empress. He stayed for three months.

1903

Among the known travelers, the ethnographic collector Benedek Balogh Barátosi (1870–1945) was in Japan during 1903 and 1904. While in Japan, he cultivated close relationships with Professor Kotarō Yamaguchi (山口小太郎), director of the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages; Jūichirō Imaoka (今岡十一郎), a student of German; and a certain *Tasabu Katsura*, who was accommodated in Barátosi's rented house during 1903–1904, and with whose help Barátosi compiled the section on Japanese culture, pedagogy, and literature for his book Dai Nippon.

Ferenc Hopp returned to Japan in **June**. During his second trip, he grew closer to Kuhn and Komor, Hungarian businessmen who owned curio shops in Yokohama and Kobe, from whom he purchased items worth 1,613 yen. That same year he attended the 5th National Industrial Exhibition (内国勧業博覧会) in Osaka. Another Hungarian, János Szinell, a glass merchant, accompanied Hopp on his journey, but almost nothing is known about him.

Lajos Herkely's sister, a resident of Eperjes, began working as a teacher at the Austro-Hungarian Legation in Tokyo, and she was still there in 1905. Her name remains unknown.[227]

1904

Among those who traveled on various missions during this period was a small group from the Monarchy who went to Russia, Korea, and Japan as military observers during the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) to witness events directly on the battlefields.

[227] Debreceni Független Újság, 1905.08.15.

(Some sources refer to figures such as Béla Dányi and Ervin Ferenc as well, but these claims are not corroborated by primary evidence.) Several Hungarian figures were among them, including Albert Bartha (1877–1960), a career officer who later became a politician and Minister of Defense. He traveled with two companions on the Trans-Siberian Express through Russia, toured Manchuria, and reached Tokyo, where the Japanese General Staff allegedly showed him war documents.[228] After returning home, he and his companions published a gray book recounting their wartime experiences. Another prominent figure was Lieutenant Lajos (II.) Windischgrätz (1882–1968), who accompanied Lieutenant General Count Häbner on a world tour as his adjutant at the outbreak of the war in 1904. Following the fall of Port Arthur in Manchuria, Windischgrätz traveled toward St. Petersburg, where he was to serve as a military attaché at the Austro-Hungarian legation. En route, he was captured by the Japanese but was soon released on the grounds of his diplomatic status. His journey eventually took him to Tokyo, where he was allegedly received several times by the Japanese emperor. After his stay in Japan, he continued his travels on to America.[229] According to a report in a contemporary newspaper, two Hungarian soldiers – a certain "*Lieutenant K.*" and a certain "*Second Lieutenant V.*" – members of the officer corps of the Fourth Army Corps Artillery Regiment, fled Budapest in 1904 to travel to Japan because they wanted to join the Japanese army, and allegedly received money from Japan to cover their travel expenses from Hamburg. The credibility of this report is uncertain, and I have not found any Hungarian with similar initials who served in the Japanese army at that time.[230] Another report mentions Sándor Becker (?-?), György Domics (?-?), and György Tankó (?-?), who signed on to a ship bound for Japan from Turnu Severin, which was anchored in Cardiff, and later entered the service of the Japanese navy: Becker as an engineer, Domics as a gunner, and Tankó as a sailor.[231]

Around 1904 or 1905, another Hungarian swindler appeared in Japan: Ignác Károly Hirsch (?-?; under his alias: Abdullah Bin Yusuf), although the veracity of reports about him, as well as his true identity, is questionable. According to historical studies,

[228] Kárpáti Aurél ifj.: *Szudánban is harcolt az új honvédelmi miniszter. A fél világot bejárta és Leninnel is tárgyalt Bartha Albert*. Demokrácia, 1946. augusztus 25., p. 8.
[229] MOL, P 703. Windischgrätz family documents
[230] Szeged és Vidéke, 1904-01-20 / 39. szám p. 4.
[231] Debreceni Független Újság, 1904.08.08.

Abdullah Yusuf traveled widely across South and Southeast Asia around 1903–1904, including India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Japan, and finally Indonesia. During this period, he was repeatedly accused of fraud, including financial deception and impersonation, and was reportedly pursued by Ottoman authorities who issued warrants for his arrest.[232] He allegedly walked around Yokohama in a Turkish uniform where he introduced himself as Dr. Abdullah Yusuf. The Hungarian press claimed that "*Japanese newspapers published his portrait because he appeared everywhere as a great Russophobe. However, he suddenly disappeared from Japan after taking out large loans*".[233] Primary sources about Hirsch or Abdullah Yusuf include Dutch colonial records, which document his activities and arrest in Jambi (a province in central-eastern Sumatra, Indonesia, located on the east coast of the island facing the Strait of Malacca region). These records are used in modern historical accounts of Pan-Islamism and colonial resistance in the Dutch East Indies, particularly concerning the Jambi Revolt and the final phase of the Sultanate of Jambi's resistance. Hirsch or Abdullah Yusuf arrived in Jambi in 1904 and attempted to encourage local nobility to rebel against Dutch colonial rule.[234]

Béla Zrínyi/Tanczenberger (1879-?) reached Japan in 1904 (or 1905) and later gave lectures about his journey on several occasions, including in Zalaegerszeg, Nagykanizsa, and Alsólendva (now: Lendava, Slovenia).[235] Béla Zrínyi embarked on his journey without much publicity or financial support.

From an article published in 1904 by the Hungarian sailor Dezső Gervai (?-?), we learn that he may have been in Japan around that time.[236]

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[232] Dr. Alaeddin Tekin: *Bir Osmanlı Ajani Mi Yoksa Bir Düzenbaz Mi? Dr. Miralay Abdullah Yusuf'un Hindistan, Sri Lanka, Singapur Ve Endonezya'daki Faaliyetleri (An Ottoman Spy or an Imposter? Activities of Dr. Colonel Abdullah Yusuf in India, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Indonesia)*. In: History Studies Uluslararası Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi International Journal of History 13/5, October 2021., pp. 1648-1663.

[233] Pesti Hírlap, 1905-09-29 / 270. szám p. 21. Translated by the Author.

[234] Anthony Reid: *Nineteenth-Century Pan-Islam below the Winds*. In: An Indonesian Frontier - Acehnese and Other Histories of Sumatra, Brill, 2004. pp. 226-248.

[235] Zrínyi Béla: *Ázsia belsejében II.*, In.: Magyar Paizs, 1905. július 13., p. 209. Béla Zrínyi is known to have brought home three volumes of his own travel notes and two volumes of memoirs from his journey to Asia, but their whereabouts are unknown, and in fact, little information about Zrínyi himself has come to light. https://holmi.nagykar.hu/irasok/4668/1.html#a433 (accessed: 2025 Sept.)

[236] Gervai Dezső: *Virágünnep Japánban*. A Jövendő, 1904. 9.sz. pp. 13-14.

An interesting figure is the globetrotter András Chrometz (?-?), who may have visited Japan in 1904.[237] Several articles about Chrometz have been published in various sources. In 1908, the following was written about him:

> "*This morning, our editorial office received a remarkable visitor. A brown, stocky little man called on us. On his head was the globetrotter hat of the English officers in Aden, over his body a Japanese cloak, in his hand a large Chinese knotted club, and he carried a bag resembling a cartridge pouch at both front and back – at first glance, an appearance that was almost amusing. However, after we became acquainted with the exotically dressed little man, we paid him our respect. The little man's name is András Chrometz. He was born in Turóc County but grew up in the vast Hungarian Great Plain, and both his intellect and speech immediately reveal his Alföld (Great Plain) roots. András Chrometz trained as a tailor, but he was also an avid reader, with a particular interest in travel. One fine day, he decided to journey around the world. He had a dual purpose in mind. First, a thirst for knowledge: is there a greater pleasure than discovering this land, its natural beauties, its people, and its fauna and flora? András Chrometz also resolved to proclaim everywhere that Hungarians exist in the world. The significance of this is understood only by those who have traveled abroad and experienced, with surprise, that hardly anyone knows the people of Árpád. Chrometz fulfilled his mission with distinction! Starting from Kiskunlacháza with just 90 fillérs, he visited Germany, Belgium, France, Iceland, Canada, the United States (San Francisco), Havana, Japan, Korea, China, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Australia, the Cape Colony, German East Africa, Ceylon, India, Aden, and Egypt. Everywhere, the local authorities verified his presence. With his keen powers of observation, he records his experiences on paper and gladly shares his rich insights with others; for this purpose, he visits cafés and restaurants. After returning from his journey around the world, Chrometz settled in Kiskunlacháza*

[237] This can be deduced from a Hawaiian newspaper article (*The Pacific Commercial Advertiser* VOL XXXIX, NO. 6681. 1904. jan. 6.) „*a sturdy little Hungarian, Andrew Chrometz, by name, came ashore from the Nippon Maru yesterday to call on the Austrian consul and see the sights (...) and is going through Japan.*"

and started a family, traveling now only during the winter months. He is currently making his way toward the Balkan Peninsula."[238]

Chrometz set off from Kiskunlacháza on September 1, 1901, and returned to Turóczszentmárton (a town now called Martin, in Slovakia) on September 30, 1904. As mentioned in a contemporary article, he kept a notebook in which he recorded his travel experiences, which included passport certificates:

"*Among the notes, in many places, there are lines of confirmation and seals from consulates of the most diverse nations. On one page, the cramped handwriting of the Tokyo consul can be read; on another, Chinese; and in other places, even stranger writings.*"[239]

In **January** 1904, Géza Szuk (1860-?), chief mechanical engineer at the Ganz factory in Budapest, traveled to Japan to study the economic and technical conditions. (He was accompanied by two colleagues, but their names are not known.) He published a short travelogue in the *Vasárnapi Újság* in 1905.

Antal Szentgáli (Antal György Kellner, 1868–1945), a civil engineer and musician, first visited Nagasaki briefly in the summer of 1901 but did not spend an extended period there until 1904, when he stayed in Japan for seventy days beginning in **April**. During this time, he traveled extensively, studied local culture, and collected Japanese folk songs (he reportedly became fluent in Japanese in later years) before leaving Japan on 21 July. Since early 1902, Szentgáli had been working in Vladivostok for the company of the wealthy American businessman David Clarkson, who was engaged in a wide range of commercial activities across East Asia. As Clarkson's exclusive local representative, Szentgáli traveled extensively throughout the region, visiting Japan, China, and Korea several times until his return to Hungary in 1911. He was primarily involved in the trade in building materials, logging, coal and granite mining, and brick manufacturing, and he also played a role in several major construction projects.[240]

Gyula Petrásovits (1881–1972) was a sailor (Arbeiter) who traveled to Japan aboard the warship Kaiserin Elisabeth. He did not write extensively, but rather kept brief

[238] Székelység, 4. évf. 49. sz. p. 3. (1908. dec. 6.) Translated by the Author
[239] Békésmegyei közlöny, 33. évf. 78. sz., 5. o. (1906. szept. 16.) Translated by the Author
[240] MNL Bács-Kiskun Megyei Levéltár, bajai részleg; Szentgáli hagyaték, XIV.17.

daily notes about events. For example, when entering ports, a Japanese warship always sailed ahead of them, showing the safe route past the sea mines laid during the Russo-Japanese War. He also wrote about visits to other ships, the latest news concerning the Russo-Japanese War, and the entertainment on board – events to which local European ambassadors and Japanese guests were also invited. He mentioned a little about the cities and Japanese women as well. Although brief and written in the form of a ship's log, his account is among the most detailed descriptions of what it was actually like to serve on an Austro-Hungarian warship. It even records such details as the number of salutes fired to welcome visitors or during port departures, punishments for crimes or offenses committed on board, and encounters with Austrian merchant ships. For the most part, the crew carried out military drills and cannon target practice. On **June** 29, 1904, they arrived at the port of Yokohama; on July 17 they sailed to Kobe; and on July 23 they left Kobe and Japan for China. On **October** 18, 1904, they docked again in Kobe, on the 26th in Yokohama, and on November 11 they celebrated the Japanese emperor's birthday by decorating the ship with festive lights. On November 12, the crew was given a day off, and three of them went on an excursion to Tokyo, where they paid a visit to the Imperial Palace, the Ministry of War, the National Diet Building, and Asakusa Temple. On December 3, they departed Japan for China.[241]

Adolf Polányi/Pollacsek (1883–1966) researched Japanese modernization through a foreign scholarship from the *Oriental Academy of Commerce (Keleti Kereskedelmi Akadémia)* between May 1904 and 1907.[242] In 1905, Polányi published a study about the development of Japanese capitalism, which he had compiled in Osaka in **September** 1904. He visited Kurakichi Shiratori (白鳥庫吉, 1865–1942), "*every Hungarian's good friend in Japan*", in May 1904, and worked as a war correspondent, writing articles about the Russo-Japanese War for the *Pesti Napló* newspaper.

1905

Among the travelers to Japan around 1905, the journeys of the writers Alajos Izsóf (1870–1945) and Imre Sebők (1878–1917), as well as of the architect Róbert K. Kertész

[241] Bálint Ferenc, Hideg István, Isztin Gyula (szerk.): *Császári és királyi haditengerészet – A világ tengerein*. A Magyar Vidékért Egyesület 2021., pp. 47-126.
[242] OSZK Kézirattár. Fond 212, Polányi Adolf: *Feljegyzés*

(1876–1951), deserve mention. (Kertész's journey was made possible by the Minister of Religion and Public Education, who awarded him a 2,000-krones travel grant.)[243]

Pál Horti (1865–1907), a painter and industrial artist, was in Japan in **May** 1905 and is also documented as being there in 1907.[244] In 1904, he traveled to the U.S. with government support to organize the Hungarian section of the St. Louis World's Fair. Already planning an extended stay abroad, he traveled with his wife and remained in America after the exhibition closed. During his stay, an encounter with an unidentified Japanese man profoundly influenced his thinking about the origins of Hungarian culture and art. He abandoned his original plan of studying North American applied arts and instead began developing a broader comparative study of ancient cultures. This research formed the basis of his planned book, *Forma és a vonal nyelve (The Language of Form and Line)*, which sought to demonstrate connections between Hungarian traditions and major ancient civilizations. After traveling through North America, Horti continued his research in Mexico, whose rich cultural heritage provided valuable material for his investigations. By this time, his wife had returned to Budapest, and he carried out his Mexican studies alone. On his way home, he contracted yellow fever in Bombay and died shortly afterwards. An article from 1907 wrote the following about him:

> "*He traveled throughout Japan, where he collected numerous valuable industrial art objects for the Museum of Industrial Art. He had already sent part of his collection home, and he wanted to bring the rest with him on his way back. He made several volumes of notes and sketches about his observations, comments, and research. In Kobe, he boarded the Austrian ship Lloyd Persia to return to Hungary. Under the hot sky, his fever broke out again and he became so ill that he had to disembark in Bombay.*"[245]

Gyula Petrásovits (1881–1972), a sailor (Arbeiter) aboard the warship *Kaiserin Elisabeth*, arrived in Japan for the second time. On **June** 19, 1905, the warship was once again off the coast of Japan, arriving in Nagasaki. There, the crew met a

[243] Hivatalos Közlöny 1903-11-11
[244] Magyar Iparművészet, 1906. 9. évf. p. 45.; Pesti Hírlap 1905. 05. 11.
[245] Budapesti Hírlap 1907. jún. 21.

Hungarian-American soldier named János Botner (?-?) from Abaúj-Torna County, who had left Hungary eight years earlier and had been serving in the U.S. Army for five years. At that time, he was stationed on an American ship in Japan. On June 26, they met another Hungarian in the city: István Fleiszig (?-?), originally from Brassó, who had left Hungary twenty years earlier. He had first gone to America, later settling in Nagasaki, where he ran a barber shop and lived with his wife and six children. On July 1, the *Kaiserin Elisabeth* arrived in Kobe, and on July 3 the crew took a day trip to Osaka. On July 12, the ship returned to Yokohama. On August 25, the ship departed from Yokohama. As Petrásovits wrote in his diary: "*We have grown very fond of this country. We are all sorry to leave.*"[246]

Around **December**, Hungarian painter Gyula Tornai undertook a creative study trip to Japan, though the exact details of his journey remain unknown.[247]

1906

Antal Jansen (?-?) was a Hungarian world traveler and 'motion picture showman' about whom we unfortunately know only what was recorded in a contemporary newspaper article published in 1906. According to that article, Jansen earned his living during his travels mainly by taking photographs as well as producing and exhibiting motion pictures.

> "*When, for example, he wanted to travel from San Francisco to East Asia, he did not buy a ticket with money, but made a contract with a shipping company to take moving pictures of its ships, which the company could use for advertising purposes. In this way he earned his free ticket. In Japan, China, and in various Asian countries and colonies, he set up cinematographic tents and there showed the pious natives and the colonial Europeans the wonders of Europe – to the admiration of the former, and to the assuagement of the latter's homesickness. Returning from his long journey, which lasted more than three years, he now*

[246] Bálint Ferenc, Hideg István, Isztin Gyula (szerk.): *Császári és királyi haditengerészet – A világ tengerein*. A Magyar Vidékért Egyesület 2021., pp. 47-126.
[247] For more information on Tornai's journey to Japan, see: 岡部昌幸「ハンガリーの画家トルナイ・ジュラの日本滞在の作品と文献について」In:『ジャポニズム研究31』, 2010., pp. 60-70.

gives lectures at home, but this time, of course, he shows them the sights of distant parts of the world."[248]

Gyula Pirnitzer (1876–?, a specialist correspondent, was sent by the Hungarian Minister of Commerce to India, China, and Japan to study commercial conditions in those countries from the perspective of Hungarian exports. He must have traveled to East Asia and Japan sometime between April 1905 and November 1906.[249] (He had previously worked as a specialist correspondent in Russia and South Africa.) On 23 March 1905, he gave a lecture at the Hungarian Royal Commercial Museum entitled "*Our Export Endeavours, with Regard to Overseas Conditions*". After his return, he was appointed deputy director of the *Commercial Museum (Kereskedelmi Múzeum)* and also served as a lecturer at the Oriental Trade Academy in Budapest.[250]

Naval officer Gyula Németh (1885–1973) served on the torpedo cruiser SMS Panther and is known to us through the postcards he sent home in 1906.[251]

"*Dear Parents! The Panther is now anchored in Yokohama Harbor, and we are leaving because we still have a lot of official business to take care of. I am curious about Japan. I have seen many countries and many different kinds of people, but I have not yet seen Japan in its homeland. We will be there in a few days. I remain your loving son, Gyula.*"[252]

"*Dear Brother! We will be staying in Japan for a longer period of time. Life here among the dwarfs is quite cheerful. I remain your loving brother, Gyula Németh.*"[253]

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[248] Tolnai Világlapja, *Magyar utazó képei Kelet-Ázsiából*, 1906. február. Source: Huszadik század internetes archívuma. http://www.huszadikszazad.hu/. (After his return, from December 1906 Jansen also maintained a studio in Budapest 7th District.)
[249] Vendéglősök Lapja, 1905.04.20.; Vegyi Ipar, 1905.03.25.
[250] Magyar Ipar, 1906-03-11 / 10. szám, Budapesti Közlöny, 1906 november 4., Vendéglősök Lapja 1905 április 20. Közérdek 1907 június 8.
[251] Bálint Ferenc, Hideg István, Isztin Gyula (szerk.): *Császári és királyi haditengerészet – A világ tengerein*. A Magyar Vidékért Egyesület 2021., p. 205.
[252] Bálint Ferenc, Hideg István, Isztin Gyula (szerk.): *Császári és királyi haditengerészet – A világ tengerein*. A Magyar Vidékért Egyesület 2021., p. 205. (Yokohama, 1906. 06. 05-24.) Translated by the author
[253] Bálint Ferenc, Hideg István, Isztin Gyula (szerk.): *Császári és királyi haditengerészet – A világ tengerein*. A Magyar Vidékért Egyesület 2021., p. 205. (Yokohama, 1906. 06. 05-24.) Translated by the author.

Postcard sent by Gyula Németh, 1906. (private collection)

1907

Between 1907 and 1912, Aurél Gaszner (1878–?) worked in Japan, where he was employed in Tokyo as a mechanical engineer by the Siemens&Schuckert company. On May 2, 1908, he was still in Tokyo, from where he sent an article about geishas to a Hungarian newspaper.[254]

Colonel Mihály Lőrinczy (?-?), traveling marshal of Prince Leopold Clement Philipp August Maria of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (1878–1916), an Austro-Hungarian officer and heir apparent to the wealth of the House of Koháry, made a trip to Japan in 1907. (Leopold was of Hungarian descent, from the Koháry branch, which possessed a significant part of Upper Hungary.) They arrived in Yokohama at 9 a.m. on **January** 27, 1907, aboard the ship *Gneisenau*, and stayed at the Oriental Hotel. On February 13, 1907, they paid a visit to the Imperial Court in Tokyo, arriving at 11:50 a.m., where Prince Leopold had lunch with the Emperor. On March 21, 1907, at 2:30 p.m., they departed the port of Yokohama on the ship *Empress of Japan* en route to Vancouver. During the visit, Lőrinczy was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, 5th Class. At the same time, Prince Leopold of Coburg was awarded the Order of the Chrysanthemum.

[254] Az Ujság, 1908-07-21 / 174. szám

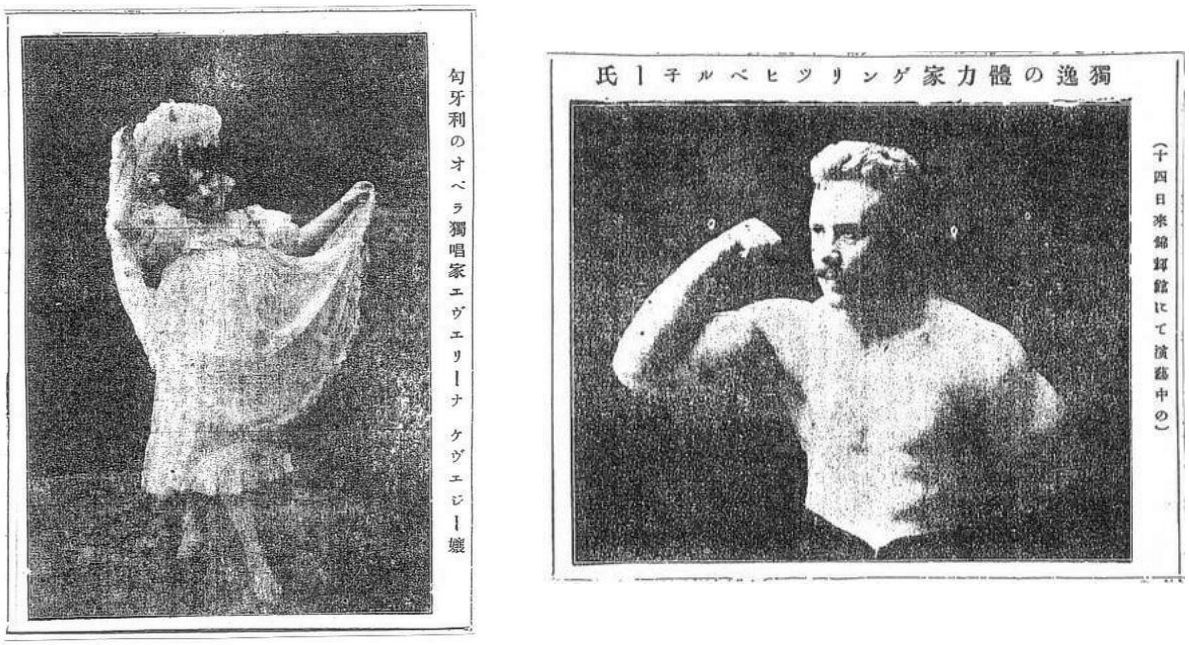
The exact details and circumstances of the journey of László Jármay (1850–1935), a spa doctor from Ótátrafüred (now: Starý Smokovec, a town located in the High Tatras of northern Slovakia), undertaken between **March** 22 and May 5, 1907, remain obscure – only a single article by him has been found.[255]

From **April** to August, Count Péter Vay (1863–1948) visited Japan for the second time, where he assembled a collection of Japanese watercolors, drawings, and engravings for the Hungarian Museum of Fine Arts.

In **May**, Evelin Kövesdy (?-?), an opera singer and dancer, performed in Tokyo and Osaka in a joint program with a German strongman.[256] The Tokyo performance began on May 14, with shows every day for five days, starting at six in the evening. Tickets were available in three categories: 1 yen, 70 sen, and 40 sen. Kövesdy's program included csárdás, Hungarian songs, and opera excerpts, although the photographs show that it also featured acrobatic elements. (Her performance was inserted between the German strongman's acts.) The Osaka performances were held from June 6 to 17. Kövesdy performed at multiple venues in Japan, with the final performance likely taking place in July.

2 photos of dancer Evelin Kövesdi, flyer for performances in Osaka (1907. source: darabanth.hu)

[255] Jármay László: *Japán fürdő- és gyógyhelyek*. In: Magyar Balneológiai Értesítő 1908, pp. 6-9.
[256] The Tokyo performance was at the 東京神田錦輝館, Tokyo's first cinema. In contemporary Japanese transcriptions, Kövesdy's name is written in several different transcriptions: エヴエリーナ・ケヴエジー嬢，ゲヴエジー嬢，ケヴジー嬢



Hungarian opera singer Evelin Kövesdi and the German strongman in Japanese newspapers (1907, May)

Dezső Bozóky (1871–1957), a ship's doctor, spent time in Japan in 1907–1908. His journey has recently been reconstructed with relative accuracy, based partly on his own itinerary and partly on contemporary brochures, tickets, invoices, menus, and annotated photo lists from his collection.[257] On the final page of Bozóky's stereophoto list, he noted the number of days spent in each location. This list records nineteen Japanese settlements and a total of 248 days in the country.[258] The reconstruction is as follows: in **June** 1907, on his first voyage, he reached the Japanese port city of Nagasaki. His ship, the *Franz Joseph I*, was docked in Yokohama from late June to early August, allowing Bozóky to explore the area. From August 8 to 12, he vacationed in Kyoto, having traveled there from Kobe – the ship's next station – before returning. During the same month, he also visited nearby Osaka. At the end of August, the ship sailed through the Inland Sea of Japan, stopping in Hiroshima, spending a week in Miyajima, and then continuing via Shimonoseki to Vladivostok. In October 1907, the ship returned to Japanese waters from Shanghai. Bozóky spent another month in

[257] Bozóky Dezső: *Keletázsiai utamon 1907 és 1908-ban sajátkezűleg felvett stereoskop felvételeim jegyzéke.* Manuscript, Hopp Ferenc Ázsiai Művészeti Múzeum Adattára (HMA) ltsz. Ad/5984.1. melléklet.
[258] Dénes Mirjam – Sebestyén Ágnes Anna: *Egy magyar utazó Japán-olvasata a századfordulón: Bozóky Dezső fotográfiái.* IN: „Közel, s Távol" V. Az Eötvös Collegium Orientalisztika Műhely éves konferenciájának előadásaiból Eötvös Collegium Budapest, 2016, p. 15.

Nagasaki, from where he later sailed to China via the Goto Islands and then on to Hong Kong.

1908

Between 1908 and 1909, Hungarian wrestler Ede Schmideck/Schmak (?-?) traveled to Japan to study judo techniques. Sources state that he had attended the classes of Kichisaburō Sasaki (佐々木吉三郎 1872–1924) in Budapest in 1906. He remained in Japan for about two and a half years, allegedly studying classical jujutsu techniques of the Kitō-ryū school (起倒流).[259] After returning home in 1911, he taught at the State Teacher Training Institute in Léva (now Levice, located in southern Slovakia) as well as at rural schools.[260]

Dezső Bozóky (1871–1957), a ship's doctor, traveled to Japan for the second time in **March** 1908. During this visit, he went to Nagasaki, Kobe, Yokohama, Miyanoshita, Hakone, Hakodate, and Nagoya, before returning again to Kobe and Yokohama. By then, the warship *Franz Joseph I* was heading back to Europe, and the crew continued their journey aboard the ship *Leopard*. On September 5–6, Bozóky made a trip to Kyoto once more. Finally, at the end of November 1908, they departed Nagasaki on the Leopard, traveling via Shanghai, Hong Kong, Canton, and Saigon, before disembarking at Pula on April 12, 1909.[261]

There are few primary sources on the journeys to Japan of lower-ranking sailors serving on the warships of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which makes the handwritten diary of Károly Vágovits (1886–1959), a member of the Monarchy's military guard in Beijing, particularly valuable. (Among his fellow travelers we find another Hungarian, Elemér Böröndy, but no further information is known about him so far.) In the diary, Vágovits reports on his East Asian assignment aboard the warship *SMS Leopard*, mostly in a simple, very terse style.[262] From the diary, we learn that the ship arrived in

[259] https://onedropzen.hu/karate/2021/12/13/610/
[260] A short article about Schmideck was published in the Tolnai Világlapja in January 1911. Source: http://www.huszadikszazad.hu/
[261] Dénes Mirjam – Sebestyén Ágnes Anna: *Egy magyar utazó Japán-olvasata a századfordulón: Bozóky Dezső fotográfiái.* IN: „Közel, s Távol" V. Az Eötvös Collegium Orientalisztika Műhely éves konferenciájának előadásaiból Eötvös Collegium Budapest, 2016, pp. 15-17.
[262] Vágovits Károly: *Utazásaim leírása* (1908. october – 1909. september), manuscript. Translated by the Author. Vágovits held the rank of *'Vormeister'*.

the port of Nagasaki at 8 a.m. on **May** 25, 1908. The writer offers no personal opinions or observations about the places visited, but the travel and stay times are recorded with great precision, and he briefly notes some scenes of the Russo-Japanese War. They departed Japan at 1:00 p.m. on September 17, 1908, waiting for an Austrian steamer of the Lloyd line, which delivered food, wine, tobacco, and ammunition to the crew from Pola, as they had run out of money and supplies in August 1908.

1909

In 1909, interested readers could follow the experiences of the Hungarian ship's doctor Richárd Kovács (?-?) in issues 29–32 of the 53rd volume of *Orvosi Hetilap (Medical Weekly)*. Kovács was employed as a ship's doctor in June 1908 on the *Slavonia*, a vessel of one of the world's largest shipping companies at the time, the *Hamburg-America Line*.

In this year, Lajos Cselőtei (?-?) traveled to Japan at the suggestion of Kichisaburō Sasaki (佐々木吉三郎 1872–1924), a Japanese judo instructor who had come to Hungary in 1906 and with whom Cselőtei had trained. The purpose of his trip was to explore the potential of incorporating judo into physical education in Hungarian schools. During his stay, he met Jigorō Kanō (嘉納治五郎 1860–1938), the founder of judo, and later published an interview with him.[263] Upon returning to Hungary, with the approval of the National Physical Education Council, he sought to combine the then-popular German gymnastics system with elements of Swedish and Japanese gymnastics.

It was mentioned earlier that during the Russo-Japanese War, it became common practice for Austro-Hungarian officers to be sent to Japan or to the war zones to gain experience for a year or two. This practice continued after the war ended. The newspaper *A Hadsereg* reported in 1909 on pioneer officers, Károly Hesz (?-?) and Konrád Winternitz (?-?): "*Károly Hesz, Imperial and Royal pioneer-captain, has already been serving in the Japanese army for a long time; now, Imperial and Royal pioneer-first lieutenant Konrád Winternitz has been assigned to the Japanese army at his own*

[263] Dr. Cselőtei Lajos: *Kano igazgató a japán testnevelésről*. Nemzeti Sport 1909. 51. Szám; https://onedropzen.hu/karate/2021/12/13/610/ (accessed: 2025 Oct.)

request for two years, where he will serve in an infantry regiment in the first year and in an infantry battalion in the second."[264]

The journey of Luczien Faltay (?-?, also known as László Faltay-Pavlovits) is shrouded in obscurity. Only a single newspaper article has survived, from which we can infer that he may have undertaken a journey to Japan around 1909.[265]

The second voyage to Japan of sailor Károly Vágovits (1886–1959), a member of the Monarchy's military guard in Beijing, took place aboard the *SMS Leopard*. The warship arrived in Nagasaki on **November** 6, 1909, at 8 a.m., amid a severe storm. The damage sustained during the storm was repaired in Nagasaki, after which they continued on to Yokohama, where on November 20, the ambassador and the military attaché were received on board the ship. Vágovits describes their sightseeing tour of Tokyo on November 14, 1909:

> "*We left Yokohama at 10 a.m. by train and had a beautiful view on both sides. We visited the following stations: Kanagawa, Kamata, Omori, Shinagawa, and finally Shimbashi, where we got off because there is no train service to Tokyo. We arrived at 11 a.m. We had lunch here first and then took a jinricksha (1 yen) to the city. We first visited Tukagawa Temple, then went to Ueno Park and the Imperial Park. On the way we saw several equestrian and other statues, including that of General Kosunoki. After visiting the Imperial Park, we went to the Tokyo War Museum, where we first saw the statue of Omura Kudan, erected in front of the museum, and then entered the museum itself, where in 43 spacious rooms we saw items that survived the war: pictures, weapons, and other artifacts. After this, we explored the city, which is beautiful, neat, clean, and mostly built in a European style. We then returned to Shimbashi and, at 6 o'clock, went back to Yokohama, arriving at 7 o'clock, from where we visited Yoshiwara, a place we had visited several times before.*"[266]

[264] *Osztrák-magyar tiszt a japán hadseregben*. A Hadsereg. 1909. I. sz. p. 10.
[265] Faltay Luczien: *Tokióból Jokohamába*. In: Vasárnapi Újság, 1909. aug. 15. pp. 689-691.
[266] Vágovits Károly: *Utazásaim leírása,* manuscript. Translated by the Author.

1910

János Kotányi (born Jakab Kojeteiner, 1858–?) was a wholesaler, paprika manufacturer, and founder of the Kotányi spice company, who journeyed to Japan in 1910, to find a new market for his own paprika powder and to purchase Japanese arts and crafts for his own Asian-themed store.[267] In Tokyo, he toured the leading decorative arts factories and warehouses, selecting some of the finest products of the Japanese decorative arts industry. He later organized an exhibition of his acquisitions – including screens, vases, salon ornaments, tea sets, and Japanese curtains – at his shop on *Teréz Boulevard (Teréz körút)* in Budapest, which was open to the public free of charge. Around the 1910s, Kotányi also ran a *Japanese import store (japán behozatali áruház)* in Budapest where he sold imported Japanese goods.[268]

Journalist Árpád Pásztor (1877–1940) went to Japan in 1910 and later wrote a book about his trip.

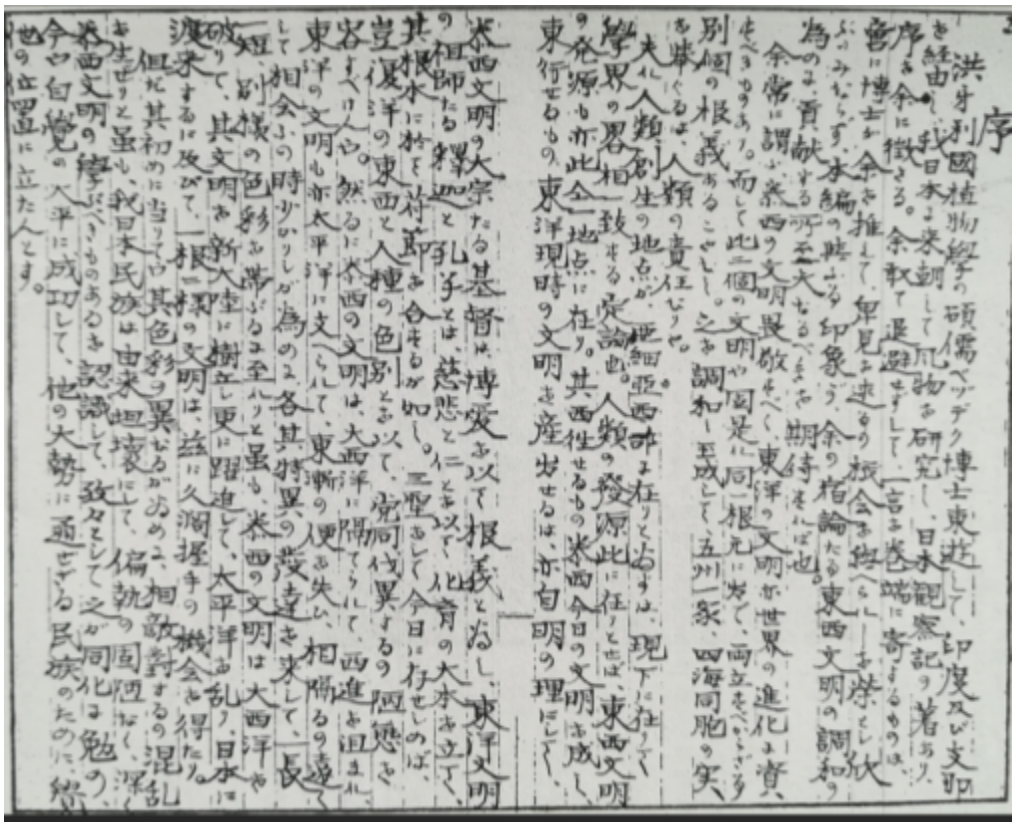
Dr. József Bezdek (1880–1969), a Hungarian botanist and high school geography teacher, visited Japan during his 1910 study trip around the world to examine Japanese public education. His visit was supported by Ödön Palotay of Várpalota and the Austro-Hungarian consulate. Bezdek published a short booklet[269] on the study trip and a longer travelogue of his global journey, which included botanical and ethnographic observations as well as a general account of Japan.[270] As mentioned in his travelogue, Bezdek met Budapest automobile dealer Alfréd Vas (?-?) and his company at a hotel in Yokohama. Details of Vas's trip remain unknown. Bezdek had the opportunity to meet Shigenobu Ōkuma, who wrote a laudatory letter about his book. The original letter was translated into German by a certain *Mr. Schiba*. Below is an English translation of the Hungarian version as it appeared in Bezdek's book.

> "*Dr. Bezdek, a professor from Hungary, undertook a study tour to Japan via India and China. He is documenting his studies in a book, and at his request, I am writing a few lines for it. I am happy to do so, because I know that the book will*

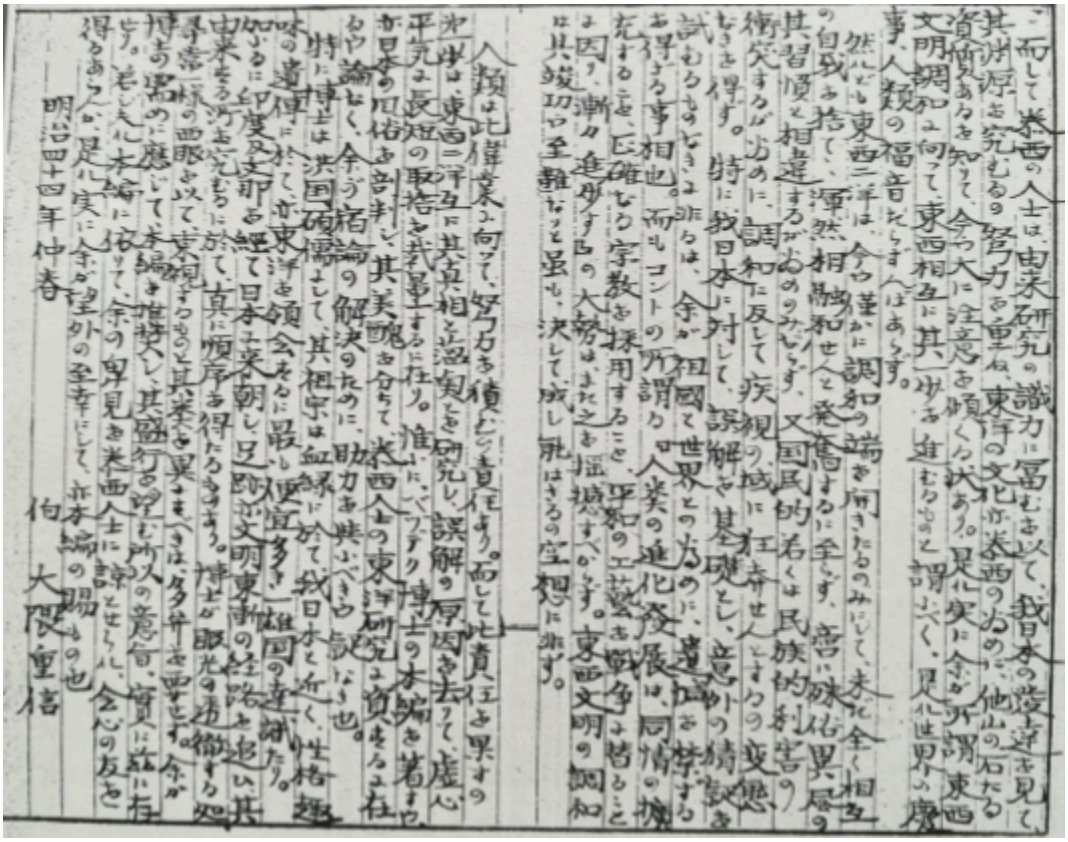
[267] Pesti Napló, 1910-10-16
[268] Magyarország, 1910-10-30
[269] Dr. Bezdek József: *Japán oktatásügyéről*, Budapest, Athenaeum, 1911.
[270] Dr. Bezdek József: *A piramisoktól a felhőkarcolókhoz. Útleírás*. In.: Váci Könyvek 6., Vác, Fritz Ny., 1913.

strive to bring Western and Eastern civilizations into closer harmony – something I have always sought to achieve. I have always maintained that Western civilization must be respected, and conversely, the world must not underestimate Eastern progress. Both spring from the same source, and for this very reason, the two can be placed side by side. It is humanity's duty to bring these two civilizations into harmony and for all peoples, in the East and West, to live in brotherhood. The cradle of Western peoples, too, was in Asia; thus, the two civilizations must have had a single source, from which both developed from a common point – and this is clearer than the sun itself. Just as Christ, the guiding figure of European civilization, established love as the foundation of his teachings, so too did Buddha and Confucius, the founders of Eastern civilization, make compassion and a good heart the banner of their teachings. All three sages were guided by the same fundamental principles; therefore, if they were alive today, they would not believe that racial differences (skin color) or global circumstances divide humanity. While Western civilization is spread by the waves of the Atlantic, Eastern civilization is not spread by the waves of the Pacific, so the two cannot meet. Thus, the two have developed in distinct forms and colors. Western civilization, as I said, reached the New World and even Japan, where, of course, Eastern civilization had also arrived, and where these civilizations of common origin met after thousands of years. At first, the twin civilizations did not welcome one another warmly. Later, however, the loving hearts of the Japanese absorbed much from Western civilization, which has become acclimatized here in the East, and now unites the Eastern peoples under one banner. On the other hand, Europeans can also see from Japan's rapid development that Eastern civilization is also worthy of attention. The first steps toward this dual encounter have brought joy to humanity. However, the two worldviews have taken only the first steps toward rapprochement; they are not yet close enough for harmony to be established. This is a difficult process, hindered by various national sentiments and interests. It is often not uncommon for erroneous views and opinions about Japan to circulate, which is as much a problem for my country as it is an unfortunate circumstance for the world. Kant says that for humanity to

progress, people must approach one another with sympathy, and there must be rapprochement among religions as well, with a peaceful love of work replacing war. Although intellectual views spread slowly, there is still hope that the unification of the two civilizations is not merely a dream of visionaries. The first prerequisite for this is the mutual study of the conditions of Eastern and Western peoples. I have no doubt that Professor József Bezdek's work on Japan offers much to a Western people who share some blood ties with the Japanese and thus find in it many pleasant parallels in character and taste. Moreover, his journey took him through India and China, allowing him to observe the progress of civilization step by step. For this reason, I am convinced that his work is not one-dimensional, which is why I recommend it to the reading public; and having expressed my thoughts in these few lines, I would also like to thank this European for this work. In Tokyo, in the 44th spring of the Meiji era. Count S. Okuma"[271]



[271] Dr. Bezdek József: *A piramisoktól a felhőkarcolókhoz. Útleírás*. In.: Váci Könyvek 6., Vác, Fritz Ny., 1913. pp. 90-94.



Ōkuma's letter to József Bezdek, 1910.

Elek Zsoldos (1866–1917), a landowner from Szentes, member of the Csongrád County Legislative Committee, and city representative, traveled to Japan, leaving behind a handwritten diary of his journey. The diary is valuable not only for its vivid and well-written descriptions of Japan, but also as an important source on Hungarian travelers who spent time in Tokyo at that time. Zsoldos arrived in Japan on **March** 29, 1910, and traveled until April 28 along the main tourist routes (Nagasaki–Kobe–Yokohama–Tokyo–Nagoya–Kyoto–Osaka). The highlight of his visit was the National Art, Industrial, and Economic Exhibition in Nagoya, which he attended on April 9, 1910. He purchased Japanese objects and often recorded in detail in his diary from whom he bought them, how much he paid for them, and what kind of objects they were. His collection of Japanese artifacts, together with his own photographs taken locally, later enriched the Szentes Museum. Zsoldos's traveling companion was the merchant Emil Zirkel (?-?), who had planned to establish a business in Japan. Although this plan failed, he nonetheless purchased several valuable works of art, whose fate

remains unknown. Zsoldos also encountered other Hungarian travelers in Japan, suggesting that the history of Hungarian travel to Japan may still hold many undiscovered stories. According to the diary, Baron Fedor Nikolics (Барон Теодор/Федор Николић од Рудне Teodor Fedor Nikolic od Rudne, 1871–?), a large landowner from Bács, visited Japan between February and April 1910. Another Hungarian, engineer Géza Huszár (?-?), spent several months in Tokyo on assignment from a French company, attempting to sell cannons in Japan.

During his third trip to Japan, sailor Károly Vágovits (1886–1959), a member of the Monarchy's military guard in Beijing, arrived in Nagasaki again on **April** 30, 1910, Here, Vágovits writes at length about his experiences in Japan:

> "*It is very nice to stay in Japan because its beautifully situated cities are all located on the seashore and are clean, beautiful, and orderly. During our stay here, we went on a trip from Nagasaki to a city called Mogi. One day half of the crew went with us, and the next day the other half. (...) Our band also played with us the whole way there and back. (...) We had a lot of fun and had our photo taken, and then we had some time off, and we had a great time there, which is impossible to describe in writing.*"[272]

Antal Velics of Lászlófalva[273] (1855–1915), a physician and orientalist, arrived in Japan in **December** 1910 and remained there at least until April 1911. He was traveling around the world and, according to his own account, knew the Japanese language well. Already on the ship to Japan, he conversed with Japanese passengers returning home from the World Exhibition in London.[274] He even wrote a Japanese language textbook, published in Tokyo in 1911.[275] (Velics began studying the Chinese language in 1897. His research into Chinese and Japanese led him to comparative linguistic studies, and his best-known works, published in Hungarian, German, French, English, and Japanese, relate to this field.)

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[272] Vágovits Károly: *Utazásaim leírása*, manuscript. Translated by the Author.
[273] Dr. Anton von Velics, Dr. Antoine de Velics. Lászlófalva: today Laclavá, a village in Slovakia (formerly Turóc County, Kingdom of Hungary).
[274] Dudek János (szerk.): Religio, 1911. 20. szám
[275] Med DR. Velics Antal: 言葉の謎 (The Problem of Languages, the Mystery of Words) 1911. Tokyo. The book's dedication reads: 有為なる大日本高級學生に謹呈す (*to the distinguished college students of Great Japan, with respect*).

Mitsuhama, May 1910, "*in a teahouse where the retired Japanese had a club room*" Group photos from the Vágovits estate

1912

An ambitious plan emerged within a Hungarian wood industry consortium (Szentlőrinci Parkettgyár Rt., Aladár Laendler, and the Neuschlos Company) when they sent a Hungarian expert to Japan to explore the possibility of establishing a wood export business, as well as to study the setup of steam sawmills and the purchase of timber yards. Unfortunately, little is known about this trip or about the expert who traveled to Japan.[276]

Nándor Tordy (?-?), a torpedo artificer, arrived in Yokohama on **September** 3, 1912, aboard the Austro-Hungarian warship *SMS Kaiser Franz Joseph I*. One of his first experiences was observing Japanese ladies, and he posed for a photo with one of them.

"*(...) beautiful women in kimonos, with large bows at the back of their waists like butterfly wings, their hair blue-black, adorned with decorations more ornate than any hat, gracefully pinned up with tortoiseshell combs and bone sticks (...)*

[276] Pesti Napló, 1912-12-17 / 297. szám

Underneath their kimonos, I hear, they wear nothing. Yokohama... Rickshaws run under pink flowering branches, sweet young women sit on embroidered silk cushions in the rickshaws, their faces white as rice flour, smiling, with a halo of parasols above their heads. Only this nasty little geisha doesn't want to smile next to me, even though the photographer is waving at her angrily. For if I can't go into the teahouse – for lack of money – at least I'll have a photograph taken here on the street, so that I can show the girls at home: I had fun with such beautiful women in Japan ... But the geisha, this nasty little frog, is pulling faces; apparently, I don't look like I have enough money to make her smile."[277]

The '*Grumpy Geisha*' and Nándor Tordy (private collection)

As the ship arrived in Japan in the year of Emperor Meiji's death (following which official mourning rituals, imperial court ceremonies, and state funerals were conducted, including public commemorations), Tordy, driven by a thirst for adventure, attempted to sneak into the city with a friend to "*witness the emperor's funeral procession*"[278] in Tokyo.

[277] Bede Anna: *Hadihajón Kínában. Egy magyar tengerész naplójából (1910-1914)*. Budapest, Z-füzetek 45. Translated by the Author.

[278] Japan was in general mourning and preparing for the upcoming funeral of Emperor Meiji, who had died on July 30, 1912. The main ceremonial procession and official state funeral took place later, on October 13, 1912. Tordy included a picture of General Nogi Maresuke's funeral procession, which occurred on September 14, 1912, but he mistakenly described it as the emperor's funeral procession. (Nogi and his wife, Shizuko, committed ritual suicide in their Tokyo residence on the evening of September 13, in accordance with the samurai tradition of *junshi* (殉死)– following one's master into death.)

“*Escape to the Emperor’s funeral. Yokohama, September 12, 1912. ‘Let's go to the funeral’ I say to my friend, a Croatian boy who is a diver on our ship. ‘How can we go?’ he replies. ‘We're not part of the delegation. Only the officers and the Austrian boys…’. ‘Then we'll run away’ I tell him. And off we go, despite the ban. We took the few yen we had, all our possessions, and didn't tell anyone. Running away from a warship is almost life-threatening; what a circus it was when two Austrian boys disappeared once! (...) But youth is youth, adventure is adventure: we got off the ship and hurried to the train station. Where could it be? Well, if not where everyone else was rushing, carried along by the crowd, here 's the station, hurry to the ticket office, board the overcrowded train, which seemed to have been waiting just for us, and it started rattling and puffing away. We're going to Tokyo to bury the son of God! The train car is low, designed for small people, but luckily I'm not a lanky guy, so I don't have to hunch over. We make friends with the passengers in English, and they are happy to talk to us. Canals, bridges, gardens, lakes... After half an hour of travel, we see increasingly larger factories, gas and tram depots, ever larger houses, public buildings... we are approaching the capital. After an hour and a few minutes of travel, we got off the train. The English detachment, the honor guard, the band, dressed in red, arrived with us. Then came retired Japanese officers and the commanders of foreign ships stationed in Yokohama, with their escorts, in full dress uniform. Tokyo, September 13, 1912. The road from Tokyo to Kyoto was covered with black mourning cloth. This is because Kyoto is the burial place of the imperial family. Carriages and automobiles rattled along all day, but by afternoon they had thinned out and the swirling crowd slowly dispersed. On both sides of the road stood rows of soldiers: the army on the left, the navy on the right. Behind them stood the crowd, no longer bustling, but solemn and stunned. The emperor is dead, long live his successor, but who knows what life will be like now? Who knows whether the new emperor will be buried or sent away? Power has collapsed in China, and Europe is being shaken by the Balkan wars. The tsar did not send his representatives here: the tears have not yet dried from the mass graves of Port Arthur. People carry sedan chairs, horses pull carriages,*

thousands of wreaths, millions of bouquets. At the edge of the city, black buffaloes are harnessed to the dead ruler's carriage, and they set off for Kyoto, the Empire of the Dead Immortals. The sky darkened. The street lamps are lit. Japanese and foreign dignitaries, English, German, French, Italian, Norwegian and others, march in a ghostly light, dressed in ornate uniforms, solemn and dignified. Allies and adversaries, those who are not shooting at each other now, but a single spark would be enough to sweep a wildfire across the road from Tokyo to Kyoto, to Beijing and Vienna, and everyone feels in their bones where they would jump then. A funeral is taking place. The youth of a world has come to an end. Legends are being buried. From Tokyo to Kyoto, large electric lanterns are lit every ten meters. From 11 p.m. to 4 a.m., every warship in Tokyo and Yokohama fired a cannon shot every minute in honor of the dead and the living emperor. The Japanese ships in Tokyo fired simultaneously, and in Yokohama it sounded like an earthquake. From Tokyo to Yokohama, muzzle flashes flickered and the earth shook. The earth is shaking. Far away, the sea roars. A typhoon sweeps away the boats. The warship Franz Joseph hastily weighs anchor and sails out of Yokohama. That same night, my Croatian friend and I returned to our place in time. No one noticed that we were missing. We were not missed."[279]

1913

Ferenc Billege (1890–1946), a naval artilleryman aboard the SMS *Kaiserin Elisabeth*, visited Japan in early **December** 1913, arriving first in Nagasaki. He did not write much about Japan, focusing instead on a single incident in which a sailor, having become drunk, fell from the ship into the sea and was buried there. The crew did not spend much time in Japan, continuing on to China soon after. On March 9, 1914, the ship returned to Nagasaki, then proceeded to Fukuyama, Mitsuhama, and Itsukushima, arriving in Kobe on March 23. They stayed there briefly before departing on April 9. On April 24, Billege was granted leave and explored Tokyo. On May 2, the ship arrived in Yokkaichi, and on May 9 they departed the coast of Japan. There was a fellow

[279] Bede Anna: *Hadihajón Kínában. Egy magyar tengerész naplójából (1910-1914)*. Budapest, Z-füzetek 45. Translated by the Author.

countryman, Márton Sükei (1891–1955), who served as a sailor aboard the SMS *Kaiserin Elisabeth*, and who was likely in Japan alongside Billege, but we know very little about him.[280]

Contemporary literature related to Japan written by Hungarian travelers

Whether in the form of official missions, study trips, or private tourism, most Hungarian travelers – regardless of social rank – shared one common trait: upon returning home, many felt that their personal impressions of distant countries and peoples, along with the variety of experiences they had, should be shared with others. As a result, they wrote articles and books about their journeys and often edited their diaries for publication. Overall, professional study trips played only a minor role in shaping knowledge of Japan, though their significance within their specific fields should not be underestimated. For the broader public, however, it was not the specialized studies that captured attention, but rather the colorful and engaging travelogues.[281] Many Hungarian travelers recorded their observations and experiences in Japan with literary talent, producing books and articles that reached a wide audience. "*It is our duty – all of us, even if only with a grain of sand – to contribute to the magnificent building of our national culture*", wrote Balázs Orbán in 1861.[282] His words may also reflect the inner motivations of Hungarian travelers who set foot in Japan. At the time, such travelers were often regarded as the 'seeing eyes of the people', and travelogues written in a light, flexible narrative style grew increasingly popular, especially when focused on East Asia. Naturally, each traveler approached their subject in a different way; raw experience, as such, does not exist. Travelogues are therefore valuable not

[280] Bálint Ferenc, Hideg István, Isztin Gyula (szerk.): *Császári és királyi haditengerészet – A világ tengerein*. A Magyar Vidékért Egyesület 2021., pp. 240-246.

[281] ***Travelogue***: one of the main genres of travel literature, foregrounding the author's personal impressions, moods, and reflections, as opposed to the objective, scholarly travel account. A looser, less cohesive variant without a unified composition is the travel notes. The genre of the travelogue emerged at the end of the 18th century and flourished during the Romantic era. ***Travel account***: a report on the experiences of a journey that seeks to record observations with objectivity, scientific credibility, and significance, in contrast to the travelogue, which emphasizes subjective reflection.

[282] Orbán Balázs: *Utazás Keleten*. Kolozsvár, 1861. Balázs Orbán (1829–1890) was a Hungarian writer, ethnographer, and politician, best known for his six-volume *A székelyföld leírása (Description of Székely Land)*, a foundational work of Hungarian ethnography and regional history.

only as sources on other cultures, but above all for what they reveal about the writer's cultural horizon – the process of cultural encounter and the degree of difference experienced.[283] Since the Romantic era, it has been widely recognized that travel serves as a means of self-knowledge and the exploration and construction of identity. As Géza Staud, theatre historian, bibliographer, university professor, and Doctor of Literary Studies wrote in *Orientalism in Hungarian Romanticism*, travel "*tells us at least as much about the travelers themselves as it does about the countries they visit*".[284] As described by Staud, the mystery, color, strange peoples, and general unfamiliarity of the 'East' have fascinated Europeans since the Romantic period. The novelty, sensation, and exoticism of the 'East' provided an ideal medium for expressing a writer's independence, foreignness, strangeness, or originality. Its unknown nature created an impression of originality, since "*everything unknown, even if painted in false colors, seems especially interesting to us.*"[285] Another factor contributing to the popularity of oriental themes was Romantic sentimentalism – the search for emotionally stirring subjects. Heart-touching stories were more effectively set in colorful Eastern contexts than in conventional domestic ones. These narratives often relied on accumulations of epithets, flowery language, metaphors, and symbols, frequently conveying feelings and experiences the author had not personally undergone. The unfamiliarity of the East offered limitless opportunities for the writer's imagination, allowing an escape from everyday reality and relieving the need for precise, faithful depiction. An additional motive was the Romantic ideal of freedom, expressed through the search for a free, natural, and primitive humanity supposedly untouched by civilization. Staud's observations remained applicable to Hungarian writings on oriental themes long after the Romantic era, particularly in travelogues. Later, after the turn of the century, the writings of Hungarian officers of various ranks in the navy of the Dual Monarchy gained popularity. These well-educated and literate men introduced Japan to the general public

[283] Peter Burke: *Útmutatás az utazástörténet számára*. In: Korall Társadalomtörténeti Folyóirat, 2006. 26. szám
[284] Staud Géza: *Az orientalizmus a magyar romantikában*. Terebess, 1999. Source: http://terebess.hu/keletkultinfo/staud.html; Claudia Schmidhofer's German-language research on travel literature on Japan also supports this: according to her, the examination of 19th-century travelogues shows that how travelers write about Japan depends on their personality and worldview. Claudia Schmidhofer: *Fakt und Fantasie - Das Japanbild in deutschsprachigen Reiseberichten 1854-1900*, Vienna Studies on East Asia Vol. 1., Praesens Verlag, Wien, 2010., p. 569.
[285] Staud Géza: *Az orientalizmus a magyar romantikában*. Terebess, 1999. Source: http://terebess.hu/keletkultinfo/staud.html

through accounts combining geographical and anecdotal elements. Many consider the travelogues of two ship's doctors, Dezső Bozóky (1871–1957; stayed in Japan in between 1907–1908) and Ferenc Gáspár (1861–1923; stayed Japan in 1886 and the early 1900s), to be outstanding examples of Hungarian turn-of-the-century travel literature. Their works "*contain all that is needed for a good, high-quality travelogue aimed at geography and popular culture: openness to the world, experiences gained in distant lands, literary style, and the ability to observe and visualize both geographically and sociographically*".[286] Dezső Bozóky recounted his trip to Japan in the second volume of *Két év Keletázsiában* (*Two Years in Eastern Asia*), published in 1911. The second volume of *Two Years in East Asia* also includes photographs. While images of the population are present, photographs focusing on architecture and landscapes dominate. The Japanese photographs mainly depict traditional buildings, pagodas, and teahouses. Almost two-thirds of the photographs taken in Japan in this volume either exclusively depict women or place them prominently at the center. Many of these are staged images of geishas in eroticized poses. As Bozóky notes in his introduction, he "*found a fairyland*" in Japan, and perhaps this is why he sought to present this 'fairyland' to his readers – presumably primarily male – through these photographs.[287] The other ship's doctor, Ferenc Gáspár also earned recognition in the field of geographical knowledge dissemination with his monumental five-volume work, *A Föld körül (Around the Globe)*. The final volume, Volume V, focuses on Japan. In one of Tamás Tóth's research papers, Gáspár's work is analyzed, noting that roughly two-thirds of the photographs from Japan and China in this volume fall into the categories of architecture and local residents. Of the images depicting locals, a quarter of those from China and half of those from Japan feature only women or place them prominently at the center.[288]

Among the travelers and their travelogues on Japan, it is worth mentioning the works of Alajos Izsóf (1870–1945), Imre Sebők (1878–1917), and architect Róbert K. Kertész (1876–1951), based on their travels around 1905; the colorful newspaper

[286] Nagy Miklós Mihály: *Geográfiai hadilobogó alatt* (In: Magyar Tudomány, 2001/7.)
[287] Tóth Tamás: *Vizuális Kelet-reprezentációk a XX. század eleji magyar orientalisták távol-keleti útinaplóiban.* In: „Közel, s Távol" VII. Az Eötvös Collegium Orientalisztika Műhely éves konferenciájának előadásaiból, 2017., Budapest, p. 21.
[288] Tóth Tamás: *Vizuális Kelet-reprezentációk a XX. század eleji magyar orientalisták távol-keleti útinaplóiban.* In: „Közel, s Távol" VII. Az Eötvös Collegium Orientalisztika Műhely éves konferenciájának előadásaiból, 2017., Budapest, pp. 19-20.

articles of writer Ottília Márkus Mrs. Kornél Kozmutza (1873–1951) from her journeys around 1901–1902; and the book by journalist Árpád Pásztor (1877–1940) documenting his 1910 trip around the world. The latter traveler, the renowned Hungarian journalist, published the volume *Budapesttől a Föld körül Budapestig (From Budapest Around the World to Budapest)* in 1911, issued by *Nyugat (The West)*, a highly influential Hungarian literary journal. In the same year, Ignotus – a Hungarian poet, critic, and one of the founders and the first editor-in-chief of *Nyugat* – wrote a review of the book:

> "*There are dream travelers who are aware of the eternal limitations of travelogues, and who know that one never sees anything other than what one has carried within oneself. From this constraint they wring art, like the Greek sculptor from the triangular pediment into which he had to arrange his figures. The most recent of such travelogues is that of the kind and warm Kellermann,*[289] *whose Japanese travelogue could bear the title: With Eyes Closed, or What I Saw in Japan Without Looking at It. There are, however, the 'Americans of travelogues', who use the principle of 'bringing-with-them' as if it were a tent or a yacht, beneath whose shelter – or upon whose floor – they are at home even in the most foreign wilderness or harbor. The two types are joined in the poet-journalist, who seeks out foreign towers with the certainty of a businessman, around which he lets the birds of his own poetic soul take flight. Árpád Pásztor is such a travel writer.*"[290]

Ignotus highlights that in Pásztor's case the journalist and the poet struggle against each other during the journey, but upon arriving in Japan, it is clearly the poet who prevails:

> "*As he looks around in this world, it is precisely the journalist in him who becomes organized into an artist. His Japan is a great report – of the kind with which Luigi Barzini can be epic, and with which Jules Huret once gave the first perceptible portrait of Germany. 'Whom must I speak with there?' – this is the first question the journalist asks himself when he travels after some great event.*

[289] Bernhard Kellermann (1879–1951), German novelist and poet, published *Ein Spaziergang in Japan (A Walk in Japan)* in 1910, a vivid travelogue portraying Japanese life and culture.
[290] Ignotus: *Budapesttől a Föld körül Budapestig* – Pásztor Árpád könyve; Nyugat, 1911. 13. Szám. Translated by the Author.

Pásztor proceeds in just this way – with calculated regularity. What will their leading politician want to persuade me of and have me report back home? What do they teach their children? What are their press relations like? How do they fit love on the street into their lives? And so he goes into the palaces, the schools, the editorial offices – and also into Yoshiwara, the quarter of the girls, which, incidentally, has since burned down. And he is able to see and to show this whole world with such intimate, homely understanding as if he were merely exchanging passing cues about it all, just like about a provincial town where we spent our childhood. He speaks to us as though we already knew all these strangenesses – and by doing so, he acquaints us with them and steals them into our friendship."[291]

Pásztor – like many travelers – could not spend much time in Japan. By contrast, some lived there for several years, including the apostolic missionary Ernő Szeghy (1872–1952), who served as tutor to the child of the imperial and royal minister Béla Ambró between 1900 and 1903. He wrote a book about his time in Japan entitled *Japán – történelmi és földrajzi vázlatok (Japan – Historical and Geographical Sketches)*, and later returned to the subject in his volume *Emlékeim (My Memories)*. Szeghy was among the travelers who provided insightful accounts he had heard directly from foreigners living in Japan.

"*Another incident happened two years ago to a Catholic missionary I know. He runs an orphanage in Tokyo that provides care and education to more than a hundred Japanese orphans. He discovered that a Japanese employee, whose job was to handle the household shopping, had abused his trust and had been embezzling money from the funds entrusted to him for about three years, to the extent that the stolen amount had already reached more than two thousand yen (4,880 Krones). He therefore sued him, and the thief confessed to the theft; nevertheless, although the thief was sentenced to a few months in prison for theft, he was not ordered to return the embezzled amount simply because neither the plaintiff nor the defendant, even with the best will in the world, could say*

[291] Ignotus: *Budapesttől a Föld körül Budapestig* – Pásztor Árpád könyve; Nyugat, 1911. 13. Szám. Translated by the Author.

exactly how much the stolen amount was, down to the last yen, sen, and rin. Yet the stolen amount could easily have been seized, since the thief had deposited it in a savings account and admitted himself that the money deposited there was entirely the proceeds of his theft. The peculiar principle that guided the judges in this case was that if the creditor does not know the exact amount of the debtor's debt, the latter cannot be compelled to pay. Accordingly, in Japan, it is best to ask the thief for a receipt for the stolen amount."[292]

"*The director of one of Tokyo's largest breweries, a Bavarian, told me the following telling story. At the brewery, no major decisions may be made without consulting him. Once, he had traveled to Yokohama, and during his absence, a boiler used to melt pitch cracked; the pitch caught fire and engulfed the small wooden roof above it in flames. Since the entire small building was located outside the brewery's actual premises, this incident posed no danger whatsoever. But it was not the fire itself that most alarmed the Japanese employees – including two who had studied in Europe – but the fact that the director was not at home, and without his approval, no matter of importance should be dealt with; and who would deny that a boiler catching fire is a matter of importance? So they sent one telegram after another to Yokohama, demanding that the director return home immediately, and when he finally arrived, they were astonished by his indignation that he had been summoned home over such a matter. Once again, the same psychological phenomenon: in a narrow-minded perspective, the principle that nothing may be done without consulting the director pushes all other considerations into the background. That if the director had been consulted, he could not have issued any other order than that the fire must be extinguished, and that this extinguishing could be carried out just as effectively in his absence as in his presence: this thought did not occur to the Japanese mind.*"[293]

[292] Katolikus Szemle 1903:2. Értekező czikkek, elbeszélések. Szeghy Ernő: *A japán gondolkozás és jellem főbb vonásai*, pp. 126-144. Translated by the Author.
[293] Katolikus Szemle 1903:2. Értekező czikkek, elbeszélések. Szeghy Ernő: *A japán gondolkozás és jellem főbb vonásai*, pp. 126-144. Translated by the Author.

"*There is hardly a word one hears more often in Japan when dealing with Japanese people than 'tadaima', which, according to the dictionary, means 'right away', but in reality is a completely vague concept and can mean anything from a short time to as long as a year. I once had lunch at a Japanese restaurant in Nikko with a fellow countryman who was passing through and wanted to know what Japanese cuisine was like. We had planned an excursion to Uraminotaki, a beautiful waterfall, after lunch, so we were short on time. Even now, if someone has urgent business to attend to, they should definitely not go to a Japanese restaurant to eat, because courtesy there forbids serving the guest quickly: after all, that would mean they want to get rid of him as soon as possible; I should have known this, but I was hoping that perhaps I could persuade our host to make an exception for us in this one instance and be impolite. So I explained politely, using the few words I had picked up from the Japanese language, that our journey was very urgent and that we needed to have lunch quickly. We had never heard so many 'tadaima'! Of course, they would bring, 'tadaima'! When I urged them again half an hour later, I heard 'tadaima' again amidst the bowing that reached the floor, but it still took an hour and a half before they brought in the lunch on lacquer trays, in lacquer bowls, with chopsticks, warm sake, and all the delights of Japanese cuisine, which, in my compatriot's opinion, weren't worth all that 'tadaima'.*"[294]

Among civilian travelers, the ethnographic collector Benedek Balogh Barátosi (1870–1945) stands out; he visited Japan several times between 1903 and 1921. During one of his stays, he unintentionally stirred political sentiments: in February 1904, during the Russo-Japanese War, a Japanese newspaper, the *Niroku Shinpō* (二六新報), suspected him and his wife of being Russian spies. The newspaper published his name and address, but later issued several apologies and introduced him to the public as a Hungarian professor researching the similarities between the Japanese and Hungarian languages through comparative linguistics.[295] Barátosi had extensive connections in

[294] Katolikus Szemle 1903:2. Értekező czikkek, elbeszélések. Szeghy Ernő: *A japán gondolkozás és jellem főbb vonásai*, pp. 126-144. Translated by the Author.
[295] 二六新報, 1904. 02. 26., 東京二六新聞, 1904. 05. 04.

Japan and numerous Japanese acquaintances. In 1914, he met Jūichirō Imaoka (今岡十一郎), a Japanese researcher who lived and worked in Hungary between the two world wars; the two collaborated for some time, although their relationship later deteriorated. Barátosi left behind a substantial three-volume work on his travels in Japan, presenting the country from almost every angle. In his early works, he tended to depict Japan with exuberant enthusiasm, as noted by Cluj-Napoca University Professor Bálint Gábor Szentkatolnay in a brief critique: "*You have tied all the flowers of Japan into a bouquet, and now the reader thinks that Japan is a flower garden in which no weeds grow*".[296] Later, Barátosi acknowledged this tendency and began writing about Japan from a somewhat different perspective. In his travelogue *Dai Nippon – Kelet csodái (Dai Nippon – Wonders of the East)*, we find photographs, the vast majority of which depict traditional buildings, temples, gates, shrines, and teahouses. Almost 60% of the images of locals feature women, most of whom are geisha or geisha apprentices. Notably, Barátosi included few images of Japanese cities and streets in this work. Yet the author consciously challenged stereotypes about the country on several occasions, and in his textual descriptions, Barátosi presents Japan not as a fairy-tale land, but as a modern, tangible, and rational world. Nevertheless, this critical perspective is not reflected in the photographs: in other words, in this case, the textual representation does not necessarily align with the visual representation.[297]

[296] *Japán, a Felkelő Nap országa*. Barátosi turáni könyvei X., Bp., Szerzői kiadás, 1930.; pp. 4.-5.
[297] Tóth Tamás: *Vizuális Kelet-reprezentációk a XX. század eleji magyar orientalisták távol-keleti útinaplóiban*. In: „Közel, s Távol" VII. Az Eötvös Collegium Orientalisztika Műhely éves konferenciájának előadásaiból, 2017., Budapest, p. 17.

Book covers of the major Hungarian travelogues published in book form: 1873 Bernáth Géza: Kelet-ázsiai utazás; 1882 Kreitner Gusztáv: Gróf Széchenyi Béla keleti utazása India, Japan, China, Tibet és Birma országokban; 1892 Gáspár Ferenc: Negyvenezer mérföld vitorlával és gőzzel; 1906 Kertész K. Róbert: Képek Ázsia Keletéről; 1906 Vay Péter: Kelet császárai és császárságai; 1906 Sebők Imre: Öt világrészen keresztül; 1906 Barátosi Balogh Benedek: Dai Nippon (I.-III.); 1907 Gáspár Ferenc: A Föld körül IV. – Vitorlával Ázsia körül; 1911 Pásztor Árpád: Budapestről a Föld körül Budapestig; 1911 Bozóky Dezső: Két év Keletázsiában II.; 1913 Sebők Imre: Tengereken túl; 1914 Vay Péter: A Keleti féltekén

Travel literature about Japan in Hungarian – although relatively small in volume, amounting to only a dozen books – constitutes a specific genre that has shaped the geographical, ethnographic, and cultural image of many Hungarians. (It might be interesting to compare this number to the high number – approximately 100 – of published travel literature in Hungarian about *America* between 1860 and 1913, and we can see what it indicates about the differences in public interest and literary production between regions and countries.)[298] As a cultural-historical value, it deserves to be preserved, nurtured, and passed on to posterity. However, in Hungary a comprehensive literary-theoretical and critical cultural studies analysis of travelogues about Japan is still lacking, even though such an endeavor could offer an exciting challenge: mapping the literary-cultural aspects and rhetoric of the texts, examining authors' strategies within the travelogue genre, and exploring the descriptive and narrative conventions of their

[298] Glant Tibor: *Amerika, a csodák és csalódások földje. Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok képe a hosszú XIX. század magyar utazási irodalmában*. Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, Debrecen, 2013.

era. Foreign scholarship has already produced examples of such work, and it would be particularly fruitful to compile analyses from a Hungarian perspective.[299] In this context, one remarkable study stands out as indispensable, not only for Hungarian but also for broader European and even transnational research: Claudia Schmidhofer's 2010 corpus-based investigation[300] of German-language travelogues. She draws attention to the fact that this field has long been neglected and has received only marginal importance – partly because of the sheer quantity and variety of primary sources, and partly because of the challenges involved in the scholarly study of travelogues as a genre. Schmidhofer examined independent travelogues about Japan published in German-speaking regions between 1850 and 1900, which are also highly relevant to Hungarian scholarship. According to her research, within the entirety of German-language literature on Japan, the number of travelogues and general works of country information published between 1850 and 1920 amounts to 365 independent entries – 145 of them appearing between 1850 and 1899, and 220 between 1900 and 1920. (In comparison, the bibliography of the entire English-language travel literature on Japan lists 220 works published between 1853 and 1895).[301] Schmidhofer later refined the above figures, calculating that German-language travel literature consisting solely of independent travel accounts amounted to approximately 90 volumes between 1854 and 1900, although only about 60 of these were included in her corpus-based research. She analyzed the texts thematically, through topoi and imagological perspectives, essentially adopting a critical cultural studies approach. Her aim was to explore what kind of image of Japan emerges from the German-language descriptions and to identify the reasons and factors that shaped the contemporary German perception of Japan. The main topoi identified by Schmidhofer are as follows: ***legitimation topos*** – travel writers justified the demand for their works by emphasizing three factors: the lack of European knowledge

[299] Wolfgang Neuber: *Zur Gattungspoetik des Resieberichts*. In: Brenner, Peter J. (szerk.): *Der Reisebericht: Die Entwicklung einer Gattung in der deutschen Literatur*. Frankfurt, 1989, pp. 50-67.
[300] Claudia Schmidhofer: *Fakt und Fantasie - Das Japanbild in deutschsprachigen Reiseberichten 1854-1900*, Vienna Studies on East Asia Vol. 1., Praesens Verlag, Wien, 2010.
[301] Claudia Schmidhofer: *Fakt und Fantasie - Das Japanbild in deutschsprachigen Reiseberichten 1854-1900*, Vienna Studies on East Asia Vol. 1., Praesens Verlag, Wien, 2010, pp. XV-XVI. ; See also: Wolfgang Hadamitzky, Marianne Kocks. *Japan-Bibliografie*. Verzeichnis deutschsprachiger japanbezogener Veröffentlichungen, München, 1990., pp. 5-41.; John Ashmead: *The Idea of Japan 1853-1895*. Japan as described by American and Other Travellers from the West. Harvard Dissertations in American and English Literature. New York/London, Garland Publishing. 1978.

about Japan, the country's rapid and sweeping changes, and the need for subjective representation; ***idyll and paradise topos*** – Japan was portrayed as a desired, utopian, alternative world in contrast to the West; ***ancient, old Japan topos*** – Japan appeared as a *locus amoenus*, i.e. an ideal place, an endangered paradise, a flower garden, or a poetic land in harmonious natural idyll, typically rendered in picturesque descriptions; ***romanticizing topos*** – Japan was depicted as a fairy-tale or dream world, a kind of fairyland; ***exoticizing topos*** – Japan was presented as a land of opposites, a paradoxical place; ***discriminatory topos*** – the Japanese were portrayed as a Lilliputian, childish, dollhouse-dwelling people, or described in terms of their body structure, height, and imitation of Europeans, Americans, and modernity. Another noteworthy result in Schmidhofer's work is her list of attributes ascribed to the Japanese, along with her observation that German-speaking travelers mostly assigned positive qualities to them in the latter half of the 19th century.[302]

Positive	**Negative**
- Cleanliness	- lack of morality and ethics
- Courtesy	- frivolity
- Respect	- excessive curiosity
- Civilized behavior	- superficiality
- Developed aesthetic sense	- dishonesty, unreliability (in
- Love of nature	business matters, towards
- Efficiency (at work)	foreigners)
- Good humor	- distrust
- Happiness	- aloofness
- Modesty	- excessive self-esteem
- Patriotism	- lack of individualism
- Death-defying courage	- imitation, lack of originality
Learning ability	- getting lost in details
- Filial respect for parents	- materialism

Regarding the number of independent publications, Schmidhofer's research shows that between 1868 and 1880 only about a dozen German-language travelogues were published, most of them Austrian. At that time, the idea of traveling to Japan – or embarking on a world tour – was still in its infancy. Travelogues were largely formal in

[302] Claudia Schmidhofer: *Fakt und Fantasie - Das Japanbild in deutschsprachigen Reiseberichten 1854-1900*, Vienna Studies on East Asia Vol. 1., Praesens Verlag, Wien, 2010, pp. 156-446.

nature, often stemming from government expeditions to Japan, with only a handful of civilian journeys recorded. In the following decade, between 1880 and 1890, roughly the same number of German-language travelogues appeared, as in the 1870s, though in this period the share of German and Austrian authors was roughly equal. Respect and tolerance for foreign culture are evident in the German-language works of the 1880s. By then, the Japanese travel industry had developed, and European visitors began traveling to Japan in greater numbers. The country was becoming safer and more attractive, though gradually more expensive, while world tours were simultaneously growing in popularity. Travel was losing its exploratory character, and standardized tourist routes were beginning to emerge. In the 1890s, 25 independent German-language travelogues were published, of which only five were Austrian. This increase in German works can be linked to Germany's growing influence in East Asia, while world tours continued to enjoy steady popularity. Based on these travelogues, Japan first appeared to European travelers as an unknown territory – terra incognita – and later as a source of business profit, a place to purchase inexpensive export goods, a mecca for the arts, and the homeland of eroticism. Over time, Japan came to be associated with notions such as the "*eager student*", the "*military superpower*", and even the "*yellow peril*".[303]

Since German-language travelogues naturally cover a wide geographical range, Hungarian accounts may be more suitable for scientific analysis, as they offer a more narrowly defined body of material and may also reveal the influence of foreign travel literature on them.[304] Their clear disadvantage, however, is that they cannot compete with German- or English-language travel writing in terms of quantity or international visibility. The only exception is Péter Vay's Hungarian book, *Kelet császárai és császárságai*, which was translated into French[305] and English[306] and published in 1906 and 1908, making it the only work with the potential to reach a wider international audience, although its reception was not always positive, as evidenced by a New York

[303] Claudia Schmidhofer: *Fakt und Fantasie - Das Japanbild in deutschsprachigen Reiseberichten 1854-1900*, Vienna Studies on East Asia Vol. 1., Praesens Verlag, Wien, 2010, pp. 523-530.
[304] some Hungarian travelers mention the works of Carl Munzinger, Karl Florenz, Johann Justus Rein
[305] Mgr Vay De Vaya et de Luskod: *Empires et Empereurs*. Paris, 1908.
[306] Count Vay de Vaya and Luskod: *Empires and Emperors*. Dutton. New York, 1906.

Times review: "*(...) he is sometimes extraordinarily dull, and the hasty manner in which his notes have been thrown together leads to tedious repetitions*".[307]

Hungarian-language travel literature on Japan between 1869 and 1913 – comprising a dozen printed books based on real journeys and personal experiences – represents a noteworthy achievement. (Alongside these early works, edited versions of manuscript diaries from the same period have begun to appear in recent years.) In the writings of Hungarian travelers to Japan before the First World War, several recurring elements emerge in their characterization of the Japanese. Of all the countries in East Asia, Japan was the most coveted destination for travelers from the Kingdom of Hungary. At first, Japan was portrayed as a charming fairyland inhabited by “friendly toy people”. Over time – especially after the Russo-Japanese War – this fairy-tale image gave way to that of a glorious and powerful Japan. Hungarian travelers frequently described Japanese patriotism as their “greatest virtue”. The Japanese were depicted as exotic, peaceful, happy, polite, benevolent, well-educated, courteous, sympathetic, and cheerful, “susceptible to the love of beauty”, and living in harmony. Their cleanliness was regarded as one of their most outstanding qualities. Hungarian travelers admired the speed with which Japan absorbed Western developments, though they remained cautious about the potential consequences of modernization and Westernization for the emerging ‘new Japan’. Not all impressions were positive, however. Some travelers described the Japanese as “closed-minded” or “overly ambitious” – criticisms of a different kind, but still distinctly negative. Additional derogatory remarks appeared in anthropological observations, focusing on physical characteristics such as height, skin color, body proportions, and the impression made by Japanese people dressed in Western clothing.[308] Compared with Hungarian examples, Japan-related elements in Western travel writings often contain negatively charged references to the country’s modernization. Western travelers during the Meiji era frequently failed to recognize Japan as a modern, industrialized nation or as a potential equal among world powers. Their accounts emphasized a fear of the “Orient”, portraying Japan’s population as overwhelming and its people as inferior. Modern Tokyo

[307] New York Times, 1902-09-22.
[308] See also: Buda Attila (szerk.): *Messziről felmerülő, vonzó szigetek II/1. – Japánról szóló, magyar nyelvű források 1870-től a japán-kínai háborúig*. Ráció, Budapest, 2012. p 17.

and Yokohama were viewed as mere imitations of Europe, with Western-designed buildings and fashions reinforcing this perception. In their search for the “extraordinary”, travelers overlooked authentic signs of Japanese modernization, reflecting both Orientalist desires for stasis and discomfort with the unfamiliar yet familiar aspects of progress. Japanese efforts to adopt Western styles were often ridiculed, seen as evidence of “national defects” rather than genuine advancement. On the positive emotional side, Western visitors’ perceptions of Japan were shaped by Japanese art and the Japonisme movement, creating expectations that often clashed with reality. They imagined a country reflecting the ornamental, decorative, and feminine qualities of Japanese-inspired art in Europe and America, expecting Japan itself to embody the same aesthetic as the “Japanese” interiors familiar in aristocratic homes. Many foreign visitors to Japan perceived the country not as it was, but as an image shaped by their expectations. While the Japanese government sought to modernize to meet Western demands, its efforts often failed to be recognized as both ‘authentically Japanese’ and ‘genuinely modern’.[309]

When it comes to the experiences of foreigners in Japan, language proficiency plays a smaller role, as the majority of travelers – and even many long-term residents – had little or, at best, questionable knowledge of Japanese. A good example is Lafcadio Hearn, who never mastered Japanese and instead communicated with Japanese speakers using his own unique “Hearn language”, likely a form of pidgin Japanese[310] used in the treaty ports. Although ordinary foreigners generally had no Japanese language ability, they still sought to capture unfiltered, first-time impressions of Japanese living spaces, free from professional bias or prior cultural knowledge. A Japanese study written by Arno Suzuki identifies several aspects of how foreigners perceived certain cultural items and customs. Before the Meiji period, Japanese paintings were commonly dismissed by Westerners as childish or lacking perspective, with only a few exceptions such as Ernest Fenollosa or Commodore Perry. Their later

[309] Hannah Shepherd: *‘Strange Kaleidoscopic Scenes’: Western Representations of Japanese Cities in Meiji, 1868-1912*. In: The Princeton Journal of East Asian Studies, Jun 2013. pp. 104-110.
[310] For example, Yokohama Pidgin Japanese, spoken in the late 19th century in Yokohama and likely in Kobe and Nagasaki, had a vocabulary of about 250 words, roughly 85% of which were derived from Japanese. Andrei A. Avram: *Some Contact Languages Involving Japanese: An Overview.* In: Annals of Dimitre Cantemir Christian University. VOLUME XVIII No.1/2019., p. 13.

rise in global reputation paralleled the emergence of Impressionism, which helped broaden Western artistic standards and reshape attitudes toward ukiyo-e. Japanese cuisine was harshly judged by early foreign visitors as tasteless, inadequate, and so unfamiliar that some brought butter or jam from home to put on rice. Traditional Japanese music faced similarly low evaluations, as its non–12-tone scales and throat-based singing sounded off-key or shrill to Western ears. Meiji-era Western-style clothing worn by Japanese people drew uniformly negative reactions, being called unsuitable and even ridiculous, whereas traditional Japanese clothing was consistently admired. Japanese crafts were once unanimously praised for their high quality and artistic refinement, and their fusion of art and utility influenced the European Arts & Crafts movement, but quality declined when Japan's government pushed mass exportation for international prestige. Opinions on Japanese houses were split: some foreigners dismissed them as poor, temporary, or not real architecture, while others appreciated the elegance and advantages of their lightweight, impermanent design. Japan's natural scenery was praised as extraordinarily beautiful – "a paradise on earth" – yet foreigners also warned early that Westernization would destroy this environment. Finally, in matters of etiquette and everyday life, Westerners often found Japanese homes admirable in appearance but uncomfortable in practice, especially because sitting on the floor made daily living physically difficult.[311]

Methodological suggestions for researching travel literature and the representation of Japan

The reason why what follows is not a thorough analysis of Hungarian travel literature, but rather a well-considered, multifaceted proposal for new research directions and methodology, is twofold. First, the more I read superficial, especially nation-centred, low-quality analyses of travelogues, the more I became aware of the near impossibility of meaningfully conveying the ever-changing perceptions of a given country, for many reasons, but primarily because such analyses are detached from

[311] 鈴木 あるの「西洋人による日本文化の評価(その1)　住まいとその周辺にまつわる記述の収拾」In: 京都橘大学研究紀要, 京都橘大学研究紀要編集委員会編, (49) 2022., pp. 242-245.

many important contexts. Second, I believe that travelogues of the period concerning Japan should be examined from a transnational and/or transimperial perspective, and that relying solely on a nation-centred approach inevitably results in a limited inquiry, while comparisons with parallel works from the same period across the world provide a deeper understanding. Therefore, I have chosen instead to focus on proposing a possible new, combined methodology that draws upon existing approaches from two main fields.

An important task in researching travelogues on Japan between 1869 and 1913 would be to examine the Dualism era through both direct and indirect experiences, as well as visual and textual perceptions of Japan. This includes identifying key characteristics and issues inherent in contemporary interpretations, and outlining the main principles of qualitative research. When analyzing the image of Japan at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, four major components can be distinguished. The first component consists of the **actors** who conveyed the image of Japan – writers, photographers, art collectors, lecturers, artists, and others. The second comprises the **receiving medium**: the target audience of the time, the broader society, and its contemporary contexts. The third is the actual **content** of the conveyed image – whether visual, textual, or expressed through mixed media or objects. Finally, the fourth component includes **today's researcher**s and the 21st-century 'noise' through which this historical image is interpreted.

When examining the **actors** involved, we must consider the social, literary, and professional embeddedness of those who mediated the image of Japan, along with their attitudes – ideally by establishing basic analytical categories. One major challenge is determining what, if anything, Hungarian (Austrian, Czech, Polish, Ukrainian, etc..) identity meant to these individuals in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Identity is a particularly interesting question when it comes to travelers from the Dual Monarchy. Amartya Sen argues that individuals have multiple identities, yet people are often simplistically seen through a single lens – such as race, religion, or nationality. In traditional historiography, national identity is usually prioritized, causing 'border-crossing' or multiethnic individuals to be overlooked, even though recent research shows such figures were common and influential in the global colonial

context.[312] A possible classification of the Dual Monarchy's travelers was proposed by a research project, which employed a tentative categorization based on the travelers' socio-economic statuses and scientific backgrounds, rather than separating the records of Austrian, Czech, Hungarian, and Polish travelers according to their supposed nationalities.[313] Other studies also argue that class, rather than nationality, better explains global developments – an approach that suggests its usefulness for analyzing so-called 'Habsburg' travelers, or travelers from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. However, this perspective has its caveats: while the class lens offers new insights, it is broad and can obscure other historical dimensions.[314] Tourism as an act should also be examined with regard to the actors. Although tourism – albeit not in the modern sense – to Japan began in the 1890s many travellers of the time may have held attitudes comparable to those of modern tourists. As Mónika Barta notes, in the case of the tourist, "*those expectations come into play which, based on prior knowledge or preconceptions about the other culture, have already been formulated in advance. If we believe or assume a culture to be exotic, we will be disappointed if this is not what we encounter. The intermediaries, meanwhile, do everything they can to ensure that the given culture appears distinctly exotic and archaic, just as it is expected to be. (…) The tourist's comfort extends so far that they are willing to accept foreign elements only through the mediation of familiar ones*".[315] The gender of these travelers is also an important factor to consider. While thousands of women traveled across Japan, only a small portion published journals or letters detailing their daily experiences, customs, and impressions – often encouraged by family or sponsors. From a British perspective, this increase reflected shifting Victorian norms that made women's travel more socially acceptable and coincided with the rise of adventurous female figures who challenged

[312] Amartya Sen: *Identity and Violence*. London, Penguin, 2015.
[313] Csaba Mészáros – Stefan Krist – Vsevolod Bashkuev – Luboš Bělka – Zsófia Hacsek – Zoltán Nagy – István Sántha – Ildikó Sz. Kristóf: *Ethnographic Accounts of Visitors from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to the Asian Peripheries of Russia and Their Contribution to the Development of Systematic Ethnological Studies in the Monarchy: Preliminary Results and Research Perspectives.* In: Acta Ethnographica Hungarica 62(2), p. 472. (2017), DOI: 10.1556/022.2017.62.2.10
[314] Christof Dejung, David Motadel, and Jürgen Osterhammel: *The Global Bourgeoisie: The Rise of the Middle Classes in the Age of Empire*. Princeton University Press, 2019.
[315] Barta Mónika: *Turizmus – Új otthonosság* In: Veress Károly (szerk): *Az interkulturalitás –interdiszciplináris megközelítésben* Egyetemi Műhely Kiadó Bolyai Társaság – Kolozsvár, 2008. pp. 345-346. Translated by the Author.

domestic stereotypes. Most British women visited Japan briefly, usually as part of larger world tours lasting less than two months. Among them, Isabella Bird was the most famous, while others such as Nellie Bly, Elizabeth Bisland, and Lilian Leland gained recognition for their global journeys in the late 1880s–1890s.[316] Regarding the extent to which gender influences travel literature, Tomoe Kumojima argues that "*femininity proves to be an asset to travelers in developing genuine cross-cultural intimacy and promoting more equitable understandings of Japan and Japanese people*".[317] Women in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy faced social and educational limitations, with university admission delayed and societal expectations confining them to domestic roles. This likely influenced the travels of Hungarian women to Japan: only 6% of the travelers were women, and even fewer wrote books about their journeys. First, Hermina Fischer, Mrs. Ferenc Gillming (in Hungarian: Gillmingné Fischer Hermina or Gillming Ferencné), traveled to Japan in 1877 and published a book on her round-the-world journey in German.[318] Second, Ottília Márkus, Mrs. Kornél Kozmutza (in Hungarian: Kozmutza Kornélné Márkus Ottília, 1873–1951), traveled to Japan around 1901–1902 and published articles in Hungarian and Romanian about her trip. Another woman from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, though not Hungarian, was the Czech Barbora Markéta Eliášová (1874–1957), who lived in Tokyo from 1912, studied ikebana, and later published travelogues that reflected a deeper, practical engagement with Japanese culture.

As for the **receptive medium**, it is essential to define as precisely as possible the intended target group(s) of the authors – that is, how many people, from which regions and social strata, may have been exposed to the visual, textual, or mixed-media messages. A related challenge lies in clarifying what is meant by *contemporary Hungarians*, Austrians, Czechs, and others: what did these identities signify during the Dualist era, and who exactly constituted the target audience? It is also important to explore the internal stratification of contemporary Hungarian identity within the recipient community, and whether this shaped perceptions of Japan. In analyzing textual

[316] Ronald D. Klein: *Western Women Tourists Write about Meiji Japan, Part I*. In: Hiroshima jogakuin daigaku daigakuin gengo bunka ronsō 14. 2011., pp. 1-14.
[317] Tomoe Kumojima: *Victorian Women's Travel Writing on Meiji Japan: Hospitable Friendship*. Oxford University Press, 2022., p. 50.
[318] *Notizen unserer Reise um die Welt in den Jahren 1875–1877*, Budapest: Druck von Martin Bagó & Sohn, 1881.

elements, the literacy levels and reading competencies of the time must be taken into account. Nor should the influence of contemporary Western European ideas – such as colonialism and imperialism – on visual and textual materials be overlooked. To what extent were the texts, images, objects, and performances (including mixed media and theatrical productions) aligned with the Western discourse of the period, and to what extent did they diverge from it within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Kingdom of Hungary? Equally important is the historical contextualization of these cultural outputs, including the political, geopolitical, and regional differences that shaped their reception and interpretation.

When examining the **content** itself, attention can be given to both textual and visual representational elements, as well as to other forms, such as audiovisual or mixed media. The textual components of first-hand experiences primarily include travelogues – personal accounts, *ego documents* written by real individuals for a wider audience. These non-fiction works, grounded in direct local experience, are often composed during or after a journey and typically follow a diary-like structure, including specific dates and time periods. They describe places (countries) other than the author's place of origin or identification, portraying events and encounters that are culturally and geographically distinct from the author's own experiences. In a broader sense, textual fragments such as letters, articles, and notes sent home can also be regarded as ego documents. When examining the travelogues, we must consider to what extent the authors, who identified as Hungarian, Austrian, Czech, Polish, etc., drew on other visual and textual representations from within the Monarchy – representations not in their native language but related to Japan – and how these influenced their perceptions. It is also crucial to investigate the boundary between constructed and factual representations. Analyzing the vocabulary used can offer valuable insights: what traditions govern the use of specific terms? What kinds of acceptance or rejection are associated with particular verbal imagery, and how do these elements relate to each other historically? Additionally, it is important to consider how the background of a verbal imagery is either actively or passively present, affirmed, rejected, mocked, or altered within the text. The context of the figure of speech is also important: what is the textual setting, and which genre does it belong to (e.g., narrative,

descriptive, humorous, propagandistic)? What is the status, meaning, and function of the vocabulary used? In other words, literary contextualization is essential.[319] This approach applies to the study of fictional literature, stage plays, and urban legends as well. Simultaneously, examining visual, textual, or object-based humor – along with the edgy, cynical, or politically incorrect elements treated according to their contemporary value – adds depth to the research. Incorporating contemporary receptions, reflections, opinions, and criticisms is equally valuable. It is also crucial to examine the validity of the representational element over time (e.g., how long it remained in the public consciousness, how many times it was republished, where and for how long it was in circulation, etc.). Additionally, it would be valuable to explore the textual analysis of so-called *homeward-talking*[320] and conjectures.

The **visual** elements primarily consist of photographs, photo collections (albums), and series – or, more broadly, any other visual content – which may be integrated into the body of a text.[321] Ideally, it is most beneficial to examine not only the textual and visual elements individually but also their interplay and interaction, taking into account the dynamic and narrative differences between them. The sources are inherently subjective, and this subjectivity cannot be overlooked. It may also be valuable to investigate which elements from Western sources influenced domestic representations – specifically, which concepts, expressions, stereotypes, motifs, and explanations are rooted in Western discourses. For a comprehensive analysis, it is crucial to establish precise statistics on the positive and negative connotations of visual and textual elements, particularly within their temporal and regional contexts.

More attention should be given to **other elements** that contributed to shaping the image of Japan in the Dual Monarchy. These include stage works, stage sets, material

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[319] Joep Leerssen: *Imagology: History and method* In: *Imagology: The cultural construction and literary representation of national characters. A critical survey* Rodopi, 2007 pp. 26-29..

[320] Sinologist Mátyás Mervay aptly refers to the topics that function as reference points – intended by the publishers specifically for Hungarian readers and in which the authors allude to contemporary Hungary – as "*homeward-talking*" in the travelogues of Hungarian travelers to China. These topics are meaningful only in relation to Hungary; the foreign world becomes a pretext, a guise for writing about their own environment, allowing the authors to draw comparisons and establish connections between their exotic subject and their homeland. See: Mátyás Mervay: *„Hungarians Talk Homeward from the Celestial Empire: Voices in the Hungarian Press on China and the Chinese (1869-1904)"* Regional Conference of the Association of Asian Studies, 2018-2019.

[321] An excellent repository of photographs and illustrations extracted from European books, called the 'Overseas Images of Japan Database', can be found here: https://sekiei.nichibun.ac.jp/GAI/en/top/ (accessed: 2026 Jan.)

culture, art collections, and fashion. In a broader sense, places of socialization (e.g., ‘Japanese’ cafés and restaurants), music, events (such as world exhibitions, other industrial and artistic fairs, and ‘Japanese balls’), film screenings, and edutainment performances also played a role.

Lastly, the **perspective of today’s researcher** should not be neglected. With what attitude and underlying assumptions should one approach such investigations? What pitfalls or conceptual frameworks might influence current interpretations of the ‘*Hungarian image of Japan in the 19th/20th century*’? It must be proactively recognized that, in interpreting/constructing the image of Japan in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy today, a modern Hungarian researcher inevitably relates to Japan (and to Hungary within the Monarchy) from their own political, ideological, and cultural standpoint. Consequently, personal biases may cause interpretations to ‘slip astray’. It is clear that today’s perception of Japan is influenced by diverse ideologies, political views, cultural policies, soft-power campaigns (e.g., the Cool Japan country image campaign, neo-Japanism), and far richer, more interactive personal experiences than in previous eras. Researchers operate within this environment, which cannot simply be abstracted away; therefore, this philosophical issue should be acknowledged in research. It is problematic to reduce the historical image of Japan to a static, past-oriented construct. Viewed retrospectively from today, we must recognize that the image of Japan likely changed even on a daily or weekly basis during the era, not to mention regional differences within the Hungarian Crown and the continuous shaping effect of ideological and political influences. In other words, the image evolves continuously in multiple dimensions: horizontally over time, vertically across social strata, and along political and ideological lines.

It should be acknowledged that presenting a uniform contemporary image from the present is highly misleading. The image of Japan constructed from today’s perspective often reflects our current need to synthesize some kind of essence at all costs. In this process, interpretation becomes overly narrow and simplified. Moreover, the texts and images of the period frequently fall outside the framework of verifiability or factuality: they often comprise imagined or constructed elements, making it difficult to draw a clear line between the contemporarily constructed and the factual. Especially

problematic is the historiographically reconstructed public opinion or perception of a certain country. These opinions and perceptions are often simply those that are easiest to access and study, especially those found in the press. Historians frequently rely on newspapers because they are convenient sources, but this can be misleading, since the press can be influenced and does not automatically represent the public as a whole. Still, careful analysis of press history and context can reveal whose views particular publications reflected. The press captures at least part of broader public sentiment, but only when combined with other public and private sources can it help researchers construct an approximate picture of historical public opinion. Another issue is that the somewhat 'antiquated' image of Japan constructed retrospectively from a present-day perspective is difficult, if not impossible, to verify conclusively. The question of the objectivity of the image of Japan constructed from the present naturally arises, as does the question of the philosophical processes underlying interpretation. As Kinga-Eszter Réti observes: "*The outsider's point of view is also not possible because we cannot step out of our original historicity, we cannot strip off our temporality, our finitude, and – to use Husserl, Heidegger, and Gadamer – we cannot leave the lifeworld, being-in-the-world and tradition in which we have always been. (...) Just as we are in historicity, time, or language, so we are in our own culture, and (...) there is no area free of historicity, time, or language from which we could make these objects of investigation with the objectivity of the sciences*".[322]

It is noticeable that research on the image of Japan in Hungary to date has mostly remained at the level of source surveys, offering intellectually unchallenging, simple descriptions and generally mediocre presentations of non-representative primary materials. These studies rarely focus on the dynamic interplay between the foreign image and domestic identity or self-image. They tend to view the image of Japan unilaterally – either visually or textually – seldom examining it in a holistic, interdisciplinary manner. As a result, the image of Japan emerging from such research must be approached with suspicion regarding its accuracy. There appears to have been little effort toward a comprehensive, critical examination of the entire problem area with

[322] Réti Kinga-Eszter: *Az interkulturális kommunikáció fenomenológiai, ontológiai és hermeneutikai tapasztalata* In: Veress Károly (szerk): *Az interkulturalitás –interdiszciplináris megközelítésben* Egyetemi Műhely Kiadó, Bolyai Társaság – Kolozsvár 2008. pp. 170., 173-174. Translated by the Author.

a theory-building focus. Moreover, even today, the necessary assumptions, conceptual frameworks, and methodological tools are still lacking. Unfortunately, many Hungarian researchers seem unable to accept that it is no longer feasible to construct a representative sample using purely manual, 20th-century research methods. It should also be noted that not only Hungarian-language texts were consumed in the Monarchy. Many people were multilingual, and assuming that everyone formed their image of Japan solely from Hungarian-language sources – or solely textual, visual, or material elements from the territory of the Hungarian Crown – constitutes an unacceptable simplification. From an empirical perspective, it is therefore impossible to speak of a strictly homogeneous or unified image of Japan in the Hungarian Kingdom. Different social and age groups, as well as regional and local communities of the time, likely held diverse images of Japan. If we are to research the development of Japan's image, one of the most important starting points should be to focus fundamentally on *theories of cultural or national stereotypes*, rather than on *theories of cultural or national identities*, and to approach representation both as a *textual/visual strategy* and as a *discourse*. The goal should be to understand the *discourses of representation*, rather than to study another society or its people directly. The textual and visual image of Japan should not be treated as sociological or anthropological *hard facts*. The cultural contexts that shape and nourish these images are themselves part of discursive practices, and it may not be appropriate to consider them, a priori, as public opinion – or even as national public opinion. How representative a text's image of Japan is more *intertextual* than a sociological question. Another important task is to examine national self-images and compare them with changes in the regional image of Japan in contemporary Hungary and the West, adding the question of how the Japanese perceived themselves.[323] As Károly Veress writes: "*When two cultures meet, self-representation can also work in the opposite direction (backwards): the representation of one culture about itself can influence the image of the other culture about it.*"[324] We must acknowledge that attributing certain traits and characteristics to various 'nations' is a very old and

[323] Joep Leerssen: *Imagology: History and method* In: *Imagology: The cultural construction and literary representation of national characters. A critical survey* Rodopi, 2007. pp. 26-29.
[324] Veress Károly: *A kultúra, mint inter-kultúra*. In: Veress Károly (szerk): *Az interkulturalitás –interdiszciplináris megközelítésben* Egyetemi Műhely Kiadó, Bolyai Társaság – Kolozsvár 2008. pp. 170.; 173-174. Translated by the Author.

widespread tendency. This tendency stems from an ethnocentric stance: any pattern that deviates from the local, familiar customs is labeled as eccentric, different, strange, or unique. Theories of national character also arise from this ethnocentric perspective. National character, as such, is constructed far more from clichés and hearsay, and from canonized earlier texts, than from empirical observations or objective facts.[325]

Hungarian scholar Géza Szász developed a brilliant interdisciplinary method for reading travelogues that focuses less on literary value and more on context, motivation, information, and cultural impact. His approach studies why and how travelogues were written, how they shaped images of nations, and how they functioned for readers as sources of knowledge, entertainment, or escapism. He emphasizes the need to examine two main readerships: **(1) Historical readership** – examining who read travelogues in their own time, why, and how they circulated (through publications, catalogs, and estates). **(2) Modern readership** – helping contemporary readers interpret them as intersections of history, geography, and literature. Szász highlights the role of "celebrity travelers", whose reputation amplified a travelogue's influence regardless of readership. From this, he defines the "*significant travelogue*" (*récit de voyage majeur*) – texts written by notable figures, published promptly after travel, and impactful in shaping public perceptions of foreign countries. He stresses the importance of classifying different traveler types to understand the genre's diversity. His method for reading and analyzing travelogues is structured into seven criteria: **I. The traveler**: their identity, motivations, prior knowledge, intended audience, and methods; the influence of famous authors was greater, while little-read works had a more limited impact. **II. The journey**: route, scope, and purpose; the role of a given country in the journey reveals whether its prominence was deliberate or incidental. **III. Transport and infrastructure**: descriptions of travel methods show how mobility affects comfort, speed, and perception of landscapes; landscape depictions – beyond mere description, landscapes (urban, rural/cultural, uninhabited) are tied to memory, comparison, and symbolism in shaping impressions. **IV. Society**: perceptions of social structures are shaped by prior readings, local conversations, and firsthand observations; analysis requires both vertical

[325] Joep Leerssen: *Imagology: History and method* In: *Imagology: The cultural construction and literary representation of national characters. A critical survey* Rodopi, 2007. pp 26-29.

(hierarchies, nobility) and horizontal (social groups) perspectives. **V. Information gathering**: the processes by which travelers acquired and conveyed knowledge, closely tied to their portrayal of society. **VI. Encounters**: travel writers rely on personal meetings and readings, but these often reflect recurring themes, misconceptions, or prejudices. Attention should be given to pronoun use as a deliberate linguistic choice that reveals processes of othering. Building on the idea that self-identification intensifies when encountering alterity in unfamiliar settings, it is worth exploring identity discourses in travel writing as textual traces of a *chronotope of encounter* (the phrase designates a spatiotemporal situation in which the self meets the other – a moment when identity is negotiated or transformed through contact with difference or alterity). In travel writing, this chronotope may include the time and place of meeting someone from another culture (for example, a marketplace, border crossing, ship, village, or desert), the duration of the encounter (fleeting, sustained, or recurring), and its narrative function – how it challenges or reinforces the traveler's sense of self. Thus, the *chronotope of encounter* is not merely a literal meeting but a textual and conceptual space-time where the self confronts the other and identity is redefined.[326] Encounters in travelogues are especially valuable for identity studies because, as Derek Gregory notes, nineteenth-century European travel writing reveals how class, culture, gender, and geography created tensions and fluid identities that were continually renegotiated through the physical and social distances of travel.[327] Encounters can be: **no real communication** (due to language barriers, only physical traits noted), **pre-arranged meetings** (with elites, often formal and staged), **chance encounters** (rare, spontaneous, offering genuine dialogue). Plus, there are two "absent encounters": planned but canceled, or deliberately omitted. Distinguishing these types reveals much about style, credibility, and communication. **VII. Country-specific themes**: each travelogue includes recurring motifs and expressions, some tied to a given country, others spanning multiple periods or regions. These reflect both reader expectations and cultural clichés. At the end of his explanation, Szász highlights certain limitations in

[326] Vladimir Gvozden: *Srpska putopisna kultura 1914–1940: Studija o hronotopičnosti susreta*. Službeni glasnik. 2011

[327] Derek Gregory: *Between the book and the lamp: Imaginative geographies of Egypt, 1849–50*. In: Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 20(1), 1999. p. 30. https://doi.org/10.2307/622723

applying these methods: some texts are too brief or poorly structured for deep analysis, while particular eras systematically omitted specific topics, restricting interpretation.[328]

Another field that can contribute additional methodological considerations is imagology. People often interpret the world through stereotypes of national or ethnic character. Imagology, a branch of Comparative Literature, studies these representations of national character, focusing on how nations are portrayed and contrasted, especially in terms of "Self" vs. "Other." Early imagological research mainly catalogued depictions of foreigners in literature, assuming "national characters" were real and fixed. (These works are now considered naive but remain useful as bibliographic resources.) Modern imagology, however, does not treat national characterizations as factual. Instead, it examines them as discursive constructs – cultural and literary conventions rather than sociological realities. The field has been especially prominent in Europe, shaped by European nationalism and colonial ideologies, and has regained importance in today's context of identity politics and resurgent nationalism. Imagology – as summarized by Joep Leerssen – is founded on eight basic theoretical assumptions that have shaped the study of national character since the 1960s. [1] National characterizations, or *ethnotypes*, cannot be verified against any objective reality; they are discursive constructs, expressed through narrative tropes and rhetorical patterns. [2] Ethnotypes are inherently oppositional. They define identity by contrasting the "Self" with the "Other," whether through ethnocentrism, exoticism, or xenophobia, operating on the assumption that nations reveal their true essence in the traits that distinguish them from others. [3] Not all statements about nations qualify as ethnotypes. What distinguishes them is the attribution of behavior to an assumed psychological or temperamental character. Because they link action to motivation, both fictional and non-fictional narratives are particularly significant for imagological research. [4] Ethnotypes often rely on recurring, supra-national oppositions: the rational, moral North versus the passionate, emotional South; the dynamic Centre versus a stagnant Periphery; the despotic East versus the democratic West; or powerful great nations contrasted with harmless small ones. [5] These representations are not historically stable. They shift,

[328] Szász Géza: *Hogyan olvassunk útleírást?* In: Acta Historiae Litterarum Hungaricarum, 35, (2021). pp. 53–80. https://ojs.bibl.u-szeged.hu/index.php/ahlithun/article/view/34186

sometimes abruptly, so that long-established ethnotypes are replaced or overlaid by their opposites. As a result, national images often consist of layered, contradictory elements – coexisting images and counter-images. [6] Ethnotypes are also open to changing evaluations. The same characterization can be reframed positively or negatively, either through substitution by a counter-image or by altering the value attached to existing traits. [7] Yet, certain moral constants tend to recur across cultures. Family harmony, honesty, hospitality, diligence, and fidelity to promises are almost always positively valued, while their opposites – infidelity, dishonesty, laziness, or broken trust – are seen negatively. Religious piety generally functions as a positive marker, though it can just as easily be recast as fanaticism, superstition, or intolerance. [8] Finally, ethnotypes are most striking in melodramatic portrayals, where traits are exaggerated into stark contrasts, producing simplified images of nations as heroes, villains, victims, or allies.[329] Joep Leerssen notes that ethnotypes cannot be verified or falsified; their truth value is undecidable, much like a metaphor. What matters is not their factual accuracy but their rhetorical and poetic force, which depends on how recognizable they are and how effectively they are expressed. In this sense, imagology does not test stereotypes against reality but studies how they function within discourse and the ways in which they draw their persuasive power. The analysis of ethnotypes involves a threefold approach that is **intertextual**, **contextual**, and **textual** at the same time. Intertextual study traces how a given stereotype circulates across texts, showing that every new instance resonates with a larger reservoir of inherited cultural commonplaces. It also identifies the historical shifts or tipping points when a stereotype changes its meaning. Contextual study situates an ethnotype within the political, social, and cultural environment of its time, acknowledging that texts emerge from specific climates rather than from a timeless literary canon. Textual study, finally, investigates how the ethnotype is deployed within a single text: its genre conventions, its prominence or marginality, its relation to other images and self-images, and the degree to which it is affirmed, ironized, or undermined by the author's voice. Because of this complexity, imagology requires both sociological awareness and the methodological

[329] Joep Leerssen: *Imagology: On using ethnicity to make sense of the world*. In: Iberic@l, Revue d'études ibériques et ibéro-américaines, Numéro 10 – Automne 2016. pp. 14-19.

precision of literary criticism. A further issue is the problem of perspective. The distinction between hetero-images (representations of others) and auto-images (self-representations) can remain incomplete if the position of the observer is not questioned. Many auto-images are shaped by dominant external views and take the form of internalized exoticism. This can even result in auto-exoticism, when a nation adopts the outsider's gaze and portrays itself as strange or abnormal. Such cases reveal that identity is never fixed but layered, unstable, and dependent on varying degrees of self-awareness and reflection. For this reason, the study of identity and its shifting expressions has become one of the central concerns of imagology, highlighting the fluid, dynamic nature of both texts and the identities they construct.[330]

In addition, it is important to continuously follow ongoing and future German- and English-language research on the representation of East Asia and Japan. (At the same time, we should not forget the monumental pre-AI work carried out through meticulous manual analysis of foreigners' perceptions of Japan during the Meiji period in Japanese.)[331] With this in mind, we can explore how the issue might be studied in the 21st century using the most modern methods, in a way that is truly scientific and representative. Let us boldly take advantage of the opportunities offered by digital humanities, Artificial Intelligence, and Large Language Models (LLMs)! The use of AI can help filter out the cultural, political, and ideological biases of the researcher, identify sources that would be impossible to locate manually, provide statistically accurate and measurable results, and process volumes of text and images that cannot be handled manually in a short time – thus saving effort and making research more efficient. First, a large corpus would need to be compiled, or existing corpora could be used. Individual materials should be statistically weighted – for example, in textual analysis, factors such as the place of publication, number of copies, whether the account is first-hand, embeddedness in public opinion, and the social status of the author should be considered. Data should then be mined using AI – for instance, by selecting positive

[330] Joep Leerssen: *Imagology: On using ethnicity to make sense of the world*. In: Iberic@l, Revue d'études ibériques et ibéro-américaines, Numéro 10 – Automne 2016. pp. 19-22.

[331] 針生清人『明治期来日外国人の日本観(1)-(5)』東洋大学アジアアフリカ文化研究所年報 1990. See also the selection of 42 European and non-European works written since around the time of the opening of Japan to the outside world in the 1850s until 1908's: Shōichi Saeki, Tōru Haga: Masterpieces on Japan by Foreign Authors. Springer 2023. Further reading: 富田仁 (編集)『事典・外国人の見た日本』, 1992. 日外アソシエーツ

and negative indicators from the texts and evaluating the results by region, year, month, and significance. A prime example of such an application in digital humanities is the *Travelogues Project*,[332] launched in Austria in 2019, which focused on German-language, Asia-themed travelogues. The project demonstrates how travelogues (and textual fragments) can be identified within a massive corpus using machine learning, text mining, and adaptive topic-modeling techniques, employing a novel neural network-based approach. This represents only the first step toward a more extensive, mixed-method analysis of travelogues. The *Travelogues Project* has shown that sources in German databases can be located that would have been impossible to find manually.[333] Although the project began in 2020, the research methodology is expected to become even more precise in the coming years, and the results so far are already very encouraging. Now that the travelogues are accessible, the current phase of research aims to identify intertextual connections within the German corpus, examining how the travelogues relate to each other and how certain stereotypes and prejudices have been transmitted, evolved, or disappeared over time.

Another strong example of a new perspective from which one can analyze Japan-related travelogues or other literature is proposed by Oğuz Baykara, who examined Turkish literature in Japan between 1925 and 2024 from a translation studies perspective. A notable feature of the study is its attention to paratexts – such as prefaces, afterwords written by translators, and even visual elements of book publications – accompanying Japanese translations of Turkish literature. The approach is promising and could be productively applied to other bilateral historical contexts. The underlying research design is valuable and merits further development, as it could be adapted for broader comparative work in studies of bilateral relations. Importantly, such research also has potential applied value, as its findings could inform cultural diplomacy and country image policy.[334]

Travel literature texts can be analyzed using *axiological* analysis and *sentiment* analysis. Axiological analysis is a method of examining something (such as a text,

[332] http://www.travelogues-project.info (accessed: 2020 March)
[333] Jan Rörden - Doris Gruber - Martin Krickl - Bernhard Haslhofer: *Identifying Historical Travelogues in Large Text Corpora Using Machine Learning* (2020) pp. 12-13. Source: https://arxiv.org/abs/2001.01673
[334] Hasan Topaçoğlu (ed.): *100 Years of Turkish- Japanese Relations*, Routledge 2025. pp. 169-200

decision, policy, artwork, or social phenomenon) through the lens of values – that is, what is considered good or bad, right or wrong, desirable or undesirable. An excellent example of a methodology for sentiment analysis comes from a paper that applied deep mapping to study how 18th-century European travelers experienced Cyprus. The study focused on seven categories – places, points of interest, people, hospitality, accessibility, landscape, and food/drinks – to investigate travelers' impressions. Each travel journal was closely read to identify adjectives and phrases expressing positive or negative emotions. These were then organized and coded numerically in an Excel file and GIS geodatabase using distinct five-point scales for each category to quantify levels of pleasantness: Places and historical landmarks: Enthusiastic (5), Good (4), Average (3), Bad (2), Disappointing (1); People: Remarkable (5), Pleasant (4), Average (3), Unpleasant (2), Despicable (1); Food and drinks: Excellent (5), Good (4), Average (3), Bad (2), Disgusting (1); Landscape: Thrilling (5), Pleasant (4), Average (3), Unpleasant (2), Dreary (1); Hospitality: Very welcoming (5), Welcoming (4), Average (3), Unwelcoming (2), Very unwelcoming (1); Accessibility: Enjoyable (5), Easy (4), Average (3), Difficult (2), Dangerous (1). Each traveler's descriptions were interpreted and assigned a corresponding value on these scales, which were then mapped spatially in GIS. The most interesting part of the research is a heatmap showing the varying degrees of pleasantness across Cyprus's locations and landmarks. The study demonstrates the power of deep mapping to merge quantitative data (numeric coding and GIS visualization) with qualitative insights (subjective impressions). It enables both statistical analysis and narrative storytelling through maps. However, the author cautions that translating words and emotions into numbers can oversimplify travelers' experiences, requiring careful scholarly interpretation. Automatic methods such as NLP are not yet fully reliable for this kind of emotional analysis. Ultimately, the project shows how deep mapping can visualize historical emotions and contribute to a richer understanding of identity, place, and experience in the past.[335] As for the annotation of the texts in preparation for sentiment analysis, Plutchik and Kellerman's emotion codebook is very useful. It groups the eight original emotions into three categories:

[335] Maria Cristina Manzetti: *The Island of Cyprus through the Eyes of Eighteenth Century Travelers: A Deep Map*. In: International Journal of Historical Archaeology, April 2024. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10761-024-00740-y

positive (Joy, Surprise, Trust), negative (Anger, Disgust, Fear, Sadness) and neutral or ambiguous (Surprise: in fact, it is treated as a primary emotion with its own function, an adaptive response to unexpected events and can shift toward either positive or negative emotions). The adaptation of this model enables a more refined approach to sentiment analysis.[336] Another project uses the *Text Encoding Initiative* (TEI), a digital humanities method that enriches plain text transcriptions with XML tags, allowing researchers to structure and analyze historical manuscripts and correspondence digitally. Established in 1987, the TEI framework has evolved to meet the diverse needs of researchers across languages and disciplines. The project applies TEI to transcribe and analyze Edward Sylvester Morse's Japan diaries, moving beyond plain-text PDFs toward richly marked-up digital texts. The TEI framework developed for this project includes detailed headers with metadata such as author, date, and collection information, while the body of the text is encoded for structural elements like pages and paragraphs. In addition to structural markup, semantic tagging is used to capture meaning, including foreign-language terms, technical vocabulary, names of people and places, and cultural references. This approach allows the diaries to become more machine-readable, supporting research into linguistic patterns, scientific observations, and cultural insights. The TEI framework also enhances digital preservation and accessibility, ensuring the collection can be reused and studied globally. The markup is designed to be flexible, accommodating both simple and complex encoding depending on research needs, and thus serves as a robust tool for both analysis and long-term digital curation.[337] There are a variety of tools available for text analysis, sentiment research, and digital humanities work, each offering distinct features and applications. These tools collectively provide researchers with diverse options for analyzing, visualizing, and interpreting text data across languages, platforms, and technical skill levels, from simple, accessible solutions to highly customizable coding environments. **Lingmotif** is a high-coverage, high-quality lexical resource for sentiment analysis that goes beyond simple classification by

[336] Plutchik, R., & Kellerman, H. (Eds.). (1980). *Emotion: Theory, research, and experience (Vol. 1)*. Academic Press

[337] Emma Donnington: *Using TEI to study Edward Sylvester Morse's Japan Diaries in the Peabody Essex Museum Collection (Part 1)*. The Digital Orientalist. 08. Nov. 2024. https://digitalorientalist.com/2024/11/08/using-tei-to-study-edward-sylvester-morses-japan-diaries-in-the-peabody-essex-museum-collection-part-1/ (accessed: 2025 Nov)

providing quantitative data, visualizations of sentiment profiles over time, and qualitative analyses highlighting text items with semantic orientation. It currently supports English and Spanish, with additional languages planned.[338] The University of Otago provides a **guide to digital humanities text mining and analysis**, offering curated access to multiple programs suitable for different research needs.[339] **Microsoft's prebuilt sentiment analysis model** can detect positive, negative, neutral, or mixed sentiment at both sentence and document levels, making it particularly useful for analyzing any large text datasets.[340] **Keyword extraction methods** in natural language processing automate the identification of the most relevant words and phrases, aiding in content summarization, issue identification, and efficient analysis of large document collections.[341] The **R Project for Statistical Computing** provides a free environment for text annotation, ideal for users comfortable with coding.[342] A variety of **open-source sentiment analysis tools** offer flexible, cost-free options for performing sentiment evaluation,[343] while **Nocode Functions**[344] enables free data analysis for non-coders, supporting quick exploration of text and other datasets. **Voyant Tools**[345] is a web-based platform for text mining, visualization, and exploration of large text collections, and **Japanese-related web-based tools and corpora**[346] provide specialized resources for textual analysis in Japanese, supporting linguistic and digital humanities research. Image classification can be performed using manual annotations with **Iconclass**[347], a language-agnostic image vocabulary coded with numbers and letters. Future applications include multimodal analytics, where combined vision–language models and large language models are used for semi-automatic analysis of text–image relationships.

[338] tecnolengua.uma.es/?page_id=8&lang=en (accessed: 2025 Nov.)
[339] https://otago.libguides.com/digitalhumanities/text (accessed: 2025 Nov.)
[340] https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/ai-builder/prebuilt-sentiment-analysis (accessed: 2025 Nov.)
[341] https://www.analyticsvidhya.com/blog/2022/03/keyword-extraction-methods-from-documents-in-nlp/ (accessed: 2025 Nov.)
[342] www.r-project.org (accessed: 2025 Nov.)
[343] https://labelstud.io/blog/open-source-tools-for-sentiment-analysis/ (accessed: 2025 Nov.)
[344] nocodefunctions.com (accessed: 2025 Nov.)
[345] voyant-tools.org; https://voyant.lincsproject.ca/ (accessed: 2025 Nov.)
[346] https://jdrc.hsites.harvard.edu/textual-analysis (accessed: 2025 Nov.)
[347] https://iconclass.org/ (accessed: 2025 Nov.)

Visual representations in Hungarian travel literature

In the following, we focus on the presentation of visual representation. Although travelogues are fundamentally text-centric as a genre, they contain valuable contemporary images, which have received little attention in Hungary. It is encouraging that the visual representation of Japan at the turn of the century has increasingly attracted researchers' interest over the past 20 years. International research has already moved beyond merely collecting and cataloging the vast number of images depicting Japan and the Japanese – published in Europe or held in European collections – and works analyzing and presenting the Western image of Japan are steadily emerging.[348] Among these, a short study on the work of the official photographers of the Austro-Hungarian delegation that visited Japan in 1869 as part of the East Asian expedition, with a focus on Nagasaki, is particularly noteworthy.[349]

Meanwhile, the first signs of research on visual representation are slowly beginning to appear in Hungary. One example is Mirjam Dénes' 2018 BA thesis, in which she examined the visual representation of Japan based on materials published in the Hungarian press between 1853 and 1895. Dénes conducted a chronological, quantitative, and iconographic analysis of the visual materials, seeking to answer the question of what kind of image of Japan was conveyed by the Hungarian press during the period under study. The study, considered representative, provides a list of the press products (periodicals) that formed the basis of the research. In total, 233 images from 15 periodicals[350] were examined. The hypothesis was that the published materials were

[348] (1) In Japan, the album series『海外日本像爆类』 has been published since 2007, collecting images and illustrations from foreign books and travelogues on Japan since 1854; the content of the albums is also available online: publications.nichibun.ac.jp/ja/item/gaiz/2007-03-30/pub (accessed: March 2014, 3 volumes have been published so far); (2) in parallel, another thematic series containing colorful images was also published,『異邦人のまなざし』, which is available here: publications.nichibun.ac.jp/ja/item/mana/2007-05-21/pub (accessed: March 2014, 8 volumes have been published so far); (3) see also: Sepp Linhart: *The visual representation of Japan in the West*, In: The Development of 'Japan' in the West: Comparative Analysis, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, 2012. pp. 46-67.; (4) in 2009, the University of Tokyo launched a large-scale research program on the subject, entitled: "*Historical research in the investigation collection and analysis of old photographs related to Japan in the 19th century*",『19世紀日本生用古电视の管理安全と解析的年次教事』

[349] Luke Gartlan: *Photography and the Imperial Austrian Expedition in Nagasaki (1869-70)*. In: Old Photography Study, 2009., No. 3. pp. 72-77.

[350] *A Magyar Mérnök- és Építész Egylet Közlönye, A Nagyvilág Képekben, Archeologiai Értesítő, Borsszem Jankó, Gazdasági Mérnök, Hazánk s a Külföld, Magyar Szalon, Magyarország és a Nagyvilág, Művészi Ipar, Ország Tükre, Pihenő - a Herkules Mulattató melléklete, Tarka Világ és Képes Regélő, Új Idők, Vadász-, és Versenylap, Vasárnapi Újság*

largely reproductions of articles about Japan in English, French, and German sources, along with their associated visual-textual approaches. Dénes used the Arcanum digital database, searching for the words “Japan”, “japán” and “Nippon” up to September 2017, while also consulting other illustrated periodicals offline in libraries and conducting comparative searches in English, French, and German databases. Thanks to this painstaking manual work, she was able to trace the source of 200 out of 233 Hungarian images, revealing that the majority of Japanese-themed images published in Hungary originated from Western European illustrated newspapers. Dénes argues that first-hand visual information began appearing in the Hungarian press around 1890. The research provides insight into genre proportions: of the 233 images, 29% depict people and street scenes, 28% are art reproductions, and 12% depict landscapes, cities, and buildings.[351]

Another study, by Tamás Tóth, focuses on the visual representation of East Asia in early 20th-century Hungarian travelogues, providing a critical analysis of the photo supplements in these volumes. In his study, he examines the photo supplements in the travelogues of four Hungarian travelers active in the first half of the 20th century, published between 1906 and 1911: Benedek Balogh Baráthosi’s *Dai Nippon I–II*.; Count Péter Vay’s *A Kelet császárai és császárságai (The Emperors and Empires of the East)*; Ferenc Gáspár’s *A Föld körül (Around the World) Volume V.*; and Dezső Bozóky’s *Két év Keletázsiában (Two Years in East Asia) Volume II*. The source material for the study consisted of photographs taken in Russia, China, Korea, and Japan. Tóth examined approximately 3% of Hungarian travelers known by name (although these are considered the doyens, their representativeness is somewhat questionable), and these four travelogues cover about 30% of the known, published book-form travelogues in Hungary up to the First World War. Tóth found that the pictorial representation in these works is predominantly feminine. In the case of Japan, 60% of the images in the four travelogues depict women; in Korea, the proportion is 40%; and in China, 20%. The total number of images depicting East Asia is 76 in *Dai Nippon*, 125 in *A Kelet császárai és császárságai*, 469 in the two volumes of *Két év Keletázsiában*, and 109 in the fifth volume of *A Föld körül*.[352] It is often difficult to determine whether the authors

[351] Dénes Mirjam: *Japán vizuális megjelenése a magyar sajtóban (1853-1895)*; BA-dolgozat, 2018. KRE manuscript
[352] Tóth Tamás: *Vizuális Kelet-reprezentációk a XX. század eleji magyar orientalisták távol-keleti útinaplóiban*. In: „Közel, s Távol” VII. Az Eötvös Collegium Orientalisztika Műhely éves konferenciájának előadásaiból, 2017.,

themselves took the photographs or acquired them from other sources. Among the authors examined, Bozóky is notable for including a large proportion of his own images. Tóth organized the examined images into five categories based on what was emphasized in each image: landscape, architecture, locals, portrait, and city/street. He also analyzed the proportion of women in images depicting the local population and in portraits. Tóth was guided by the perspective of postcolonial criticism, which holds that Orientalists depicted the East as a feminine world.[353] Tóth highlights an interesting observation: the textual representation of a given country did not necessarily correspond to its visual representation. Based on the data obtained by grouping the images, it is evident that, at the beginning of the 20th century, the main Hungarian travelers reporting on East Asia primarily sought to convey the conditions there by showing photographs about the architecture and the local population.[354] Photographs of cities, urban squares, and streets outnumbered portraits in the case of China, Korea, and Japan. Another notable finding in Tóth's study is that certain phenomena became prominent only in the visual representation of Russia as the West, and other phenomena only in the visual representation of China, Korea, and Japan as the East. In the case of the West, the railway can be seen as a symbol of progress, modernity, and dynamism. In contrast, in the East, photographs of traditional or sacred buildings can be interpreted as symbols of immutability and stasis. Cities, city squares, and streets, as symbols of civilization and culture, are clearly associated with the West, while landscapes are associated with the East as symbols of uncivilization and savagery. Male workers and soldiers frequently depicted in photographs taken in Russian territory are associated with the West as symbols of strength and masculinity, whereas women –

Budapest, p. 13.; 22.; The practice of taking eroticized photographs of young Japanese women was pioneered in Japan by the Venetian photographer Felice Beato and continued by his students and successors, both Western and Japanese. These images were modeled on ukiyo-e woodblock prints and intended to create sexualized fantasies of Japanese women that aligned with the Western orientalist image of Japan. Some scholars argue that these photographs were not meant for Western ethnography or anthropology at all, but rather to satisfy the scopophilic desires of Western men. See: Eleanor M. Hight, Gary D. Sampson: *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place*. Routledge, London, 2002.

[353] Tóth Tamás: *Vizuális Kelet-reprezentációk a XX. század eleji magyar orientalisták távol-keleti útinaplóiban*. In: „Közel, s Távol" VII. Az Eötvös Collegium Orientalisztika Műhely éves konferenciájának előadásaiból, 2017., Budapest, p. 14.

[354] Tóth Tamás: *Vizuális Kelet-reprezentációk a XX. század eleji magyar orientalisták távol-keleti útinaplóiban*. In: „Közel, s Távol" VII. Az Eötvös Collegium Orientalisztika Műhely éves konferenciájának előadásaiból, 2017., Budapest, p. 21.

who appear in most images as objects serving men's entertainment – are associated with the East. In Tóth's analysis, in the case of Japan, for example, the frequent depiction of geishas in eroticized contexts, or images of pagodas and teahouses in the pictorial supplements, did not aim to present the island nation as backward or immoral. Rather, these images were likely intended to arouse the interest of the (primarily male) reading public.[355]

Another Hungarian study presents Dezső Bozóky's photographic legacy in detail, including purchased and self-made photographs, stereo recordings, and glass slides.[356] One of the main aims of the study was to distinguish Bozóky's own photographs from those he purchased. At that time, the authorship of images was not a primary concern, and Bozóky himself either did not record – or perhaps did not even know – the creators of the purchased works. The study reveals that the Hopp Ferenc Museum of Asiatic Arts holds seven albums from Bozóky's legacy, four of which contain images taken in Japan or acquired there. These albums feature a mix of demonstrably purchased and self-made photographs. In light of study's findings, albums 3, 5, and 7 share a similar structure, consisting mostly of purchased photographs, many of which were later colored and, in some cases, heavily retouched paper images.[357] Album 3 mainly contains views, street scenes, and photographs of Japanese landmarks from the Kobe, Kyoto, Lake Biwa, and Hozugawa areas. Album 5 includes similarly themed photographs from Nikko, Lake Chuzenji and Lake Yumoto, Hakone, Miyanoshita, and Nagoya Castle. Album 7 features a selection of Bozóky portraits and genre scenes – mostly still lifes, street vendors, and geishas. These, too, are not his own: professional photographers produced multiple copies from the same negatives, so such images may also be found in several well-known collections.[358] Album 1, by contrast, contains mainly Bozóky's own photographs: smaller, black-and-white, uncolored images, with only a few

[355] Tóth Tamás: *Vizuális Kelet-reprezentációk a XX. század eleji magyar orientalisták távol-keleti útinaplóiban*. In: „Közel, s Távol" VII. Az Eötvös Collegium Orientalisztika Műhely éves konferenciájának előadásaiból, 2017., Budapest, p. 25.

[356] Dénes Mirjam – Sebestyén Ágnes Anna*: Egy magyar utazó Japán-olvasata a századfordulón: Bozóky Dezső fotográfiái*. IN: „Közel, s Távol" V. Az Eötvös Collegium Orientalisztika Műhely éves konferenciájának előadásaiból Eötvös Collegium Budapest, 2016, p. 11.

[357] inventory numbers are: HMA A4760/III, A4760/V, A4760/VII.

[358] The majority of the purchased photographs are mounted on cardboard bearing the name and stamp of T. Enami (1859–1929). Owing to this substantial number of Enami works, the Hopp Ferenc Museum of Asiatic Arts holds a noteworthy Enami collection, which could serve as the subject of further research.

purchased pictures. In addition to the albums, the Hopp Museum also preserves a box of stereoscopic photographs with Japanese themes.[359] Bozóky's collection further includes professional photographs of Japanese women and geishas: simple portraits, as well as images depicting bathing, cosmetic practices, music, dining, drinking tea, or admiring flowers. The authors of the study point out that Bozóky's individual perspective is most visible in his street photographs. Among the landscapes, the frequent appearance of heavily retouched images of Mount Fuji – clearly the work of professional photographers – is especially striking. Bozóky himself appears in several of his own photographs: sometimes in European clothing in front of Japanese buildings, at other times in traditional Japanese dress alongside his fellow travelers. A ship's doctor with no formal training in photography, Bozóky openly sought to convey a positive image of Japan, a goal he pursued both in his travel writings and through his photographs.[360]

One of the largest surviving Hungarian photography collections with Japanese themes is that of the art collector Ferenc Hopp, who purchased photographs during his first trip to the archipelago in 1883. These images mainly depict Japanese landscapes and scenes of daily life. During his later journey around the world in 1903, Hopp also took his own photographs in Japan. No less significant is the photography collection of Benedek Balogh Barátosi, preserved in the *Museum of Ethnography* in Budapest. Another noteworthy collection was assembled by the landowner János Vadona from Fiume, who returned from his 1891 trip to Japan with around 200 photographs of Japanese women.[361] For financial reasons, not a single image from Vadona's collection was included in his 1893 travel book, and unfortunately nothing is known today about the survival or whereabouts of these photographs. Also of interest are Géza Szuk's own amateur photographs taken in Japan, four of which were published in Vasárnapi Újság in 1905 (issue 36, pp. 574–575). The amateur photography collection[362] of Géza Szuk has not yet been located, nor has the album of customs officer Ödön Faragó, which contains images of Japanese landmarks and landscapes. By mere chance, a photo

[359] inventory number: HMA Ad/5984.3.
[360] Dénes Mirjam – Sebestyén Ágnes Anna*: Egy magyar utazó Japán-olvasata a századfordulón: Bozóky Dezső fotográfiái*. IN: „Közel, s Távol" V. Az Eötvös Collegium Orientalisztika Műhely éves konferenciájának előadásaiból Eötvös Collegium Budapest, 2016, pp. 18-25.
[361] Bálint Gábor: *Minő fajúak a japánok (nipponiak)*? Erdélyi Múzeum, 1894. XI. kötet IX. füzet p. 586.
[362] Magyar Szalon, 40. kötet (21. évfolyam, 1903-1904/2) Április; Magyar Nemzet, 1904-03-01 / 52. szám. Szuk and his colleagues took approximately 400 photographs during their journey across Russia, China, and Japan.

album of 50 images by Emil Némethy was discovered in 2011; it contains several photographs of interest, primarily from an industrial history perspective. The album mostly depicts landscapes, temples, and statues. It also includes a few pictures by the Japanese photographer Tamamura Kōzaburō from Yokohama, showing the *Fuji Paper Company's* factory, Kyoto temples, and Buddhist statues. Additionally, the album contains a product sample of paper produced by the *Fuji Paper Company*. Némethy's album was purchased from his heirs by the *Ferenc Hopp Museum*, along with five separately laminated Japanese photographs. Beyond these collections, previously unknown photographs from various legacies continue to surface. In the 2010s, Béla Rakovszky's (1860–1916) albumen photographs of exceptionally high quality, purchased in Japan in 1901, were found; they are now preserved in the *Hanségi Museum*. He acquired these inexpensive, hand-colored images mainly in Yokohama, paying 20 sen (25 kreuzers) each. A Hungarian priest, Count Péter Vay, visited Japan several times between 1902 and 1914, where he met high-ranking officials. He wrote about Japan in two books, *Kelet császárai és császárságai (The Emperors and Empires of the East)* and *A Keleti féltekén (On the Eastern Hemisphere)*. He even attended an imperial audience, providing a detailed account of this extraordinary event. Drawing from a study, in *Kelet császárai és császárságai (The Emperors and Empires of the East)*, 40% of the photographs depicting the Japanese population feature women, while the largest proportion of images show Japanese landscapes and architecture; over 30% of the photos published about Japan are classified as landscapes. In Vay's work, the text frequently reflects on stereotypes about East Asia, often *refuting* them, while the images largely *conform* to the tradition of portraying the East as a traditional, static, fairy-tale-like, feminine world.[363] In addition to still photographs, there were also motion pictures – possibly by Attila Szemere, Antal Jansen, and Ferenc Hopp – though their current whereabouts are unknown. It is conceivable that, over time, these materials may suddenly resurface from private collections, forgotten museum shelves, or family heirlooms.

[363] Tóth Tamás: *Vizuális Kelet-reprezentációk a XX. század eleji magyar orientalisták távol-keleti útinaplóiban.* IN: „Közel, s Távol" VII. Az Eötvös Collegium Orientalisztika Műhely éves konferenciájának előadásaiból, 2017., Budapest, p. 18.

The cover of Emil Némethy's photo album (Hopp Museum, Budapest)[364]

Perhaps the most remarkable image in the history of Austrian–Japanese relations is that taken by the Austrian photographer Raimund von Stillfried (1839–1911) in Yokohama – considered the first *paparazzi photograph* of the Japanese emperor. The picture nearly provoked a diplomatic scandal, as the emperor was not permitted to be photographed. Stillfried, however, managed to outwit the Japanese police and secretly smuggled a copy out of the country. That print now belongs to French businessman Christian Polak. After the expedition's departure, Stillfried remained in Japan, where he opened a photography studio in Yokohama and later played a major role in the development of Japanese photography and the training of Japanese photographers.[365]

[364] Globetrotters arrived in growing numbers at the treaty ports, staying in hotels designed for foreign visitors and touring well-known sites described in guidebooks, newspapers, or earlier travel accounts. Commercial photography studios catered to their tastes, and photographs – often bound in luxurious lacquered albums – became the most popular souvenirs to commemorate their visits to Japan. See: "*Globetrotters' Japan: Places*" was developed by Visualizing Cultures at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and presented on MIT OpenCourseWare.

[365] Stillfried's photos taken in Japan are available online: http://oldphoto.lb.nagasaki-u.ac.jp/search/jp_list.php?prc=sch&cr=10 (accessed: 2025 Sept.) There is also one excellent study of Stillfried's work: Luke Gartlan: *A Career of Japan – Baron Raimund von Stillfried and Early Yokohama Photography*. Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2016.

Stillfried's shot of Japanese Emperor Mutsuhito (center, in white) (1872)

Regarding the photograph of the Japanese emperor, an article appeared in *Vasárnapi Újság* in 1873, which may well refer to the picture mentioned above, although the photographer is identified there as an American:

> "*Five years ago it was a capital crime in Japan to reproduce the face of the majestic Mikado in painting, drawing, or sculpture. Now the son of the sun and the sky, said to be an enlightened young man, has voluntarily had himself photographed, and his portrait is being sold in Yeddo and Yokohama for 50 cents. Last year an American photographer secretly captured a ceremonial procession, in which the figure of the Mikado could also be seen. The whole country was alarmed when it heard of this terrible outrage, and the artist escaped the punishment he deserved only by destroying his matrices*[366] *together with the copies already made. Great progress in a single year.*"[367]

The Affordability of Japan: What a Traveler Spent in the 1910s Compared to Wages of the Time in Japan and Hungary

[366] negatives/plates
[367] *A fényképek Japánban*. Vasárnapi Újság, 1873. március 30., p. 156. Translated by the Author.

In the historiography of early modern Japan–Europe relations, detailed analyses of everyday prices and wages receive little attention compared to cultural and diplomatic themes. Since there is no travel without money, let us explore prices in Japan in the early 1910s and convert them to today's values! We will also examine wage groups in Japan and Hungary to see who could afford these items and what share of their earnings would have been needed. At the exchange rate of 9 December 1903, one yen equaled 2 krones and 40 pfennigs. By the early 1910s, we may allow for approximately 10 percent inflation. During the gold standard years (c. 1897–1913), one yen corresponded to 0.75 g of gold, while one krone equaled 0.3049 g. Thus, roughly speaking, 1 yen ≈ 2.46 krones, which provides a reasonable basis for the following comparisons. These comparisons are approximate and meant to give a sense of relative purchasing power, not a strict economic equivalence. The data have been reconstructed partly from period descriptions (Hungarian travelers were avid buyers of all kinds of Japanese products and, in some cases, carefully recorded their prices) and partly from online resources created by economic historians on historical price indexes.[368] At that time, in the Kingdom of Hungary, a lower-middle-class lifestyle required a monthly income of approximately 45–100 Krones, while an upper-middle-class lifestyle required a monthly income of 100–165 Krones. Membership in the upper class began at a monthly income of roughly 270 Krones. In the table below, these roles and their wages are presented: on the Japanese side, a foreign employee (Head of Department, Economics Department, University of Tokyo) earning 550 yen/month; a young Japanese civil servant in Tokyo earning 50 yen/month; a Japanese interpreter working at the Austro-Hungarian consulate earning 100 yen/month; and an Austro-Hungarian ambassador earning 4,500 krones/month. As for the Hungarian side, we have an average saleswoman in Budapest earning 14 krones/month; a chief cashier at a joint-stock company in Budapest earning 440 krones/month; a family doctor in

[368] How much did life cost at the turn of the last century in Hungary?: https://kepeslapmuzeum.hobbipark.hu/pest/mennyibe-kerult-az-elet-a-mult-szazadfordulon/?utm_source=mandiner&utm_medium=link&utm_ca; Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a Japanese Yen Amount, 1879 - Present: https://web.archive.org/web/20130302135626/http://www.measuringworth.com/japancompare/; Hungarian monetary index – based on prices and exchange rates since 1754 https://artortenet.hu/magyar-penzertekindex-arak-es-devizak-alapjan-1754-tol/ (accessed: 2025 Oct.)

Budapest earning 80 krones/month; the Mayor of Budapest earning 350 krones/month; and a machine operator in the Austro-Hungarian navy earning 7 krones/month.

Item (Japan, c. 1910), description	Price (then, JPY/Sen) | Approx. Value (now, JPY) | Price (then, Krone/Fillér) | Approx. Value (now, HUF)	Wage % Comparison (c. 1900 Salaries, Adjusted for 10% Inflation) in Japan and Hungary
Silk-clad dolls (the simplest form: sticks dressed in silk kimonos, with heads made of finely crafted papier-mâché and real human hair)	Then: 1-2 Sen	Foreign employee, Head of Department, Economics Department, University of Tokyo: 0,002%; Young Japanese civil servant in Tokyo: 0,03%; Japanese interpreter working at the Austrian-Hungarian consulate: 0,015%; AT-HU Ambassador: 0,0008%
	Now: 20-40 Yen	
	Then: 2,5-5 Fillér	Avg. saleswoman in Budapest: 0,26%; Chief cashier at a joint-stock company in Budapest: 0,008%; Family doctor in Budapest: 0,004%; Mayor of Budapest: 0,01%; Machine operator in the Austro-Hungarian navy: 0,5%;
	Now: 50-100 HUF	
Bentō, Japanese lunch box	Then: 13 Sen	Foreign employee, Head of Department, Economics Department, University of Tokyo: 0,02%; Young Japanese civil servant in Tokyo: 0,26%; Japanese interpreter working at the Austrian-Hungarian consulate: 0,13%; AT-HU Ambassador: 0,007%
	Now: 260 Yen	
	Then: 32 Fillér	Avg. saleswoman in Budapest: 2,29%; Chief cashier at a joint-stock company in Budapest: 0,073%; Family doctor in Budapest: 0,4%; Mayor of Budapest: 0,09%; Machine operator in the Austro-Hungarian navy: 4,57%
	Now: 700 HUF	
Tea, for which the traveler received a brand-new, pretty burnt-clay teapot and a small, delicate cup. "*The pot already contains fresh tea leaves, which are poured over with hot water in front of us. It yields about six cups, and once we have drunk their contents, we simply throw both the tea and the cups out of the window.*" **Ticket to Kyoto Zoo**	Then: 3 Sen	Foreign employee, Head of Department, Economics Department, University of Tokyo: 0,005%; Young Japanese civil servant in Tokyo: 0,06%; Japanese interpreter working at the Austrian-Hungarian consulate: 0,03%; AT-HU Ambassador: 0,001%
	Now: 60 Yen	
	Then: 7 Fillér	Avg. saleswoman in Budapest: 0,5%; Chief cashier at a joint-stock company in Budapest: 0,016%; Family doctor in Budapest: 0,4%; Mayor of Budapest: 0,088%; Machine operator in the Austro-Hungarian navy: 1%
	Now: 160 HUF	
Armored warship (children's toy)	Then: 10 Sen	Foreign employee, Head of Department, Economics Department, University of Tokyo: 0,018%; Young Japanese civil servant in Tokyo: 0,2%; Japanese interpreter working at the Austrian-Hungarian consulate: 0,1%; AT-HU Ambassador: 0,0056%
	Now: 200 Yen	
	Then: 25 Fillér	Avg. saleswoman in Budapest: 1,79%; Chief cashier at a joint-stock company in Budapest: 0,057%; Family doctor in Budapest: 0,31%; Mayor of Budapest: 0,071%; Machine operator in the Austro-Hungarian navy: 3,57%
	Now: 500 HUF	
Bathing in an onsen (hot spring baths; in many places, travelers did not pay for hot baths, even at large hotels with European-style facilities) **Ringing of bells** in a Buddhist temple	Then: 1 Sen	Foreign employee, Head of Department, Economics Department, University of Tokyo: 0,0018%; Young Japanese civil servant in Tokyo: 0,02%; Japanese interpreter working at the Austrian-Hungarian consulate: 0,01%; AT-HU Ambassador: 0,00056%
	Now: 20 Yen	
	Then: 2,5 Fillér	Avg. saleswoman in Budapest: 0,18%; Chief cashier at a joint-stock company in Budapest:

	Now: 50 HUF	0,0057%; Family doctor in Budapest: 0,031%; Mayor of Budapest: 0,0071%; Machine operator in the Austro-Hungarian navy: 0,36%
Cremation	Then: 20 Yen	Foreign employee, Head of Department, Economics Department, University of Tokyo: 3,64%; Young Japanese civil servant in Tokyo: 40%; Japanese interpreter working at the Austrian-Hungarian consulate: 20%; AT-HU Ambassador: 1,11%
	Now: 40000 Yen	
	Then: 50 Krones	Avg. saleswoman in Budapest: 357,1%; Chief cashier at a joint-stock company in Budapest: 11,36%; Family doctor in Budapest: 62,5%; Mayor of Budapest: 14,29%; Machine operator in the Austro-Hungarian navy: 714,3%
	Now: 100000 HUF	
Rickshaw ride (40 km)	Then: 3,5 Yen	Foreign employee, Head of Department, Economics Department, University of Tokyo: 0,636%; Young Japanese civil servant in Tokyo: 7%; Japanese interpreter working at the Austrian-Hungarian consulate: 3,5%; AT-HU Ambassador: 0,178%
	Now: 7000 Yen	
	Then: 8 Krones	Avg. saleswoman in Budapest: 57,14%; Chief cashier at a joint-stock company in Budapest: 1,82%; Family doctor in Budapest: 10%; Mayor of Budapest: 2,29%; Machine operator in the Austro-Hungarian navy: 114,3%
	Now: 20000 HUF	
Knife handle with gold and silver inlay relief	Then: 80-100 Yen	Foreign employee, Head of Department, Economics Department, University of Tokyo: 16,36%; Young Japanese civil servant in Tokyo: 180%; Japanese interpreter working at the Austrian-Hungarian consulate: 90%; AT-HU Ambassador: 5%
	Now: 160000-200000 Yen	
	Then: 200-250 Krones	Avg. saleswoman in Budapest: 1607,1%; Chief cashier at a joint-stock company in Budapest: 51,14%; Family doctor in Budapest: 281,25%; Mayor of Budapest: 64,29%; Machine operator in the Austro-Hungarian navy: 3214,3%
	Now: 430000-540000 HUF	
Kobe–Osaka train ticket	Then: 26 Sen	Foreign employee, Head of Department, Economics Department, University of Tokyo: 0,047%; Young Japanese civil servant in Tokyo: 0,52%; Japanese interpreter working at the Austrian-Hungarian consulate: 0,26%; AT-HU Ambassador: 0,0144%
	Now. 520 Yen	
	Then: 65 Fillér	Avg. saleswoman in Budapest: 4,64%; Chief cashier at a joint-stock company in Budapest: 0,148%; Family doctor in Budapest: 0,81%; Mayor of Budapest: 0,186%; Machine operator in the Austro-Hungarian navy: 9,29%
	Now: 1400 HUF	
Corner room on the second floor, with spacious room and a covered balcony, furnished with European furnitures in Kyoto, at the **Miyako Hotel**	Then: 6 Yen	Foreign employee, Head of Department, Economics Department, University of Tokyo: 1,09%; Young Japanese civil servant in Tokyo: 12%; Japanese interpreter working at the Austrian-Hungarian consulate: 6%; AT-HU Ambassador: 0,33%
	Now: 12000 Yen	
	Then: 15 Krones	Avg. saleswoman in Budapest: 107,14%; Chief cashier at a joint-stock company in Budapest: 3,41%; Family doctor in Budapest: 18,75%; Mayor of Budapest: 4,29%; Machine operator in the Austro-Hungarian navy: 214,3%
	Now: 32000 HUF	
Boating on the Biwa Canal	Then: 3 Yen	Foreign employee, Head of Department, Economics Department, University of Tokyo: 0,545%; Young Japanese civil servant in Tokyo: 6%; Japanese interpreter working at the Austrian-Hungarian consulate: 3%; AT-HU
	Now: 6000 Yen	

		Ambassador: 0,156%
	Then: 7 Krones	Avg. saleswoman in Budapest: 50%; Chief cashier at a joint-stock company in Budapest: 1,59%; Family doctor in Budapest: 8,75%; Mayor of Budapest: 2%; Machine operator in the Austro-Hungarian navy: 100%
	Now: 16000 HUF	
A pair of ordinary **geta**, Japanese wooden sandals	Then: 30-40 Sen	Foreign employee, Head of Department, Economics Department, University of Tokyo: 0,064%; Young Japanese civil servant in Tokyo: 0,7%; Japanese interpreter working at the Austrian-Hungarian consulate: 0,35%; AT-HU Ambassador: 0,019%
	Now: 600-800 Yen	
	Then: 75 Fillér - 1 Krone	Avg. saleswoman in Budapest: 6,25%; Chief cashier at a joint-stock company in Budapest: 0,2%; Family doctor in Budapest: 1,09%; Mayor of Budapest: 0,25%; Machine operator in the Austro-Hungarian navy: 12,5%
	Now: 1600-2000 HUF	
Geisha dance at the prestigious Maple Club in Tokyo	Then: 10-30 Yen	Foreign employee, Head of Department, Economics Department, University of Tokyo: 3,64%; Young Japanese civil servant in Tokyo: 40%; Japanese interpreter working at the Austrian-Hungarian consulate: 20%; AT-HU Ambassador: 1,11%
	Now: 20000-60000 Yen	
	Then: 25-75 Krones	Avg. saleswoman in Budapest: 357,1%; Chief cashier at a joint-stock company in Budapest: 11,4%; Family doctor in Budapest: 62,5%; Mayor of Budapest: 14,3%; Machine operator in the Austro-Hungarian navy: 714,3%
	Now: 54000-162000 HUF	
Tokyo dinner (curry rice: stew, made from beef tenderloin and served with three kinds of vegetables, lettuce; bread, butter; a large bottle of Sapporo beer, and a cup of black coffee)	Then: 60 Sen	Foreign employee, Head of Department, Economics Department, University of Tokyo: 0,11%; Young Japanese civil servant in Tokyo: 1,2%; Japanese interpreter working at the Austrian-Hungarian consulate: 0,6%; AT-HU Ambassador: 0,039%
	Now: 1200 Yen	
	Then: 175 Fillér	Avg. saleswoman in Budapest: 12,5%; Chief cashier at a joint-stock company in Budapest: 0,4%; Family doctor in Budapest: 2,19%; Mayor of Budapest: 0,5%; Machine operator in the Austro-Hungarian navy: 25%
	Now: 3200 HUF	
New **paper screen** (屏風, byōbu: folding screen)	Then: 1600 Yen	Foreign employee, Head of Department, Economics Department, University of Tokyo: 290,9%; Young Japanese civil servant in Tokyo: 3200%; Japanese interpreter working at the Austrian-Hungarian consulate: 1600%; AT-HU Ambassador: 88,9%
	Now: 3200000 Yen	
	Then: 4000 Krones	Avg. saleswoman in Budapest: 28571%; Chief cashier at a joint-stock company in Budapest: 909%; Family doctor in Budapest: 5000%; Mayor of Budapest: 1143%; Machine operator in the Austro-Hungarian navy: 57143%
	Now: 8600000 HUF	

Travel history of Japanese traveling to the Kingdom of Hungary

It was unusual for Japanese travelers to travel purely for recreation, such as to escape daily life or simply for enjoyment. Trips to Europe, which was considered expensive, were especially rare. Foreign affairs statistics from the Meiji era support this

fact, although the numbers should be treated with caution. During this period, passports were issued in eight categories depending on the purpose of travel: (1) public duty; (2) study abroad; (3) business; (4) fishing and agriculture; (5) professional work; (6) service, foreign work, emigration; (7) travel; and (8) other. From the 43rd year of Meiji onward, only six categories remained: the first four remained largely unchanged, the fifth became 'all other', and the sixth was 'emigration', meaning that the travel category disappeared.[369] Of the 579,582 passports issued up to the 43rd year of the Meiji era, only 1,709 were issued for travel purposes (category 7), representing a mere 0.29% of the total. Unfortunately, we do not know how many of these journeys led to Europe or the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and were undertaken purely for leisure, as opposed to study or official duties. It is noteworthy that the travel category was removed entirely from the new passport system, although it is unlikely that travelers undertaking journeys solely for pleasure had disappeared entirely by this time. Japanese travelers visiting Hungary were primarily Japanese scholarship holders, government and ministerial delegates, professionals, businessmen, and members of art groups. This suggests that a significant portion of Japanese travelers belonged to the elite – or future elite – of contemporary Japanese society.

According to current research, 338 Japanese individuals definitely visited the Kingdom of Hungary between 1868 and 1913. Of these, 135 can be identified, while only partial information exists for 203, and for some, no information can be found from Japanese sources. Among all Japanese travelers, 317 were men and 21 were women. We know the birth and travel dates of only 133 individuals, whose average age on their first trip to Hungary was 38. Repeat travelers account for 4 percent of all cases. The available data indicate four main intervals for the length of stay in the Hungarian Kingdom. In cases where the number of days spent there is known or can be estimated (331 out of 338 cases), the most common stays lasted between one and seven days, accounting for about 84 percent of cases. 'Longer' stays – ranging from one to two weeks and from 15 days to one year – accounted for 10 and 4 percent, respectively. Stays of more than one year made up 2 percent of cases. The peak years for Japanese

[369] 上田卓爾『明治期を主とした「海外観光旅行」について』, 名古屋外国語大学現代国際学部紀要　第6号, 2010. p. 52.; categories in Japanese 1: 公用; 2: 留学（修学）; 3: 商用; 4: 漁業（農業）; 5: 職工; 6: 備、出稼（移民）; 7: 遊歴; 8:其他諸用

travelers visiting the Hungarian Kingdom, with twenty or more trips per year, were between 1900 and 1902 and from 1909 to 1911. Relatively active periods, with about five to fourteen trips per year, occurred in 1873, 1886–1887, 1896–1897, and 1904–1908. During the 1868–1913 period, both official and civilian travel from Japan to the Hungarian Kingdom increased. From 1868 to 1899, there was an average of 2.27 trips per year, while between 1900 and 1913, the average rose to 16.5 trips per year. (Since most Japanese travelers came in groups, each group member's visit counts as one trip.)[370] Estimating the total number of Japanese arrivals in the Kingdom of Hungary during this period is challenging, as Hungarian statistics exist only from 1910 – and only for Budapest – and their reliability is uncertain. Contemporary Hungarian statistical yearbooks that include tourism data feature an 'Asia' column from 1885 to 1896, showing the number of Asian arrivals, but this column disappears between 1897 and 1909. From 1910 onward, Japanese arrivals are listed under the category "*foreigners staying in hotels and boarding houses*", with the following numbers: 1910: 107; 1911: 86; 1912: 85; 1913: 97.[371] Based on my own estimates, the total number of Japanese visitors to the Kingdom of Hungary between 1868 and 1913 could have been between around 700-800 people.

These travels were facilitated by the technology and knowledge transfer of the time, as the Japanese government had a pressing need to send its young people abroad for education. In this regard, the contrast between the scholarship systems of Japan and Hungary at the time is striking. An article published in 1904 highlights this difference:

> "*The Japanese government (…) sends one hundred and fifty college students and other young professionals on study trips every two years, who receive ten thousand yen, or thirty thousand krones, as travel expenses, and travel the world. In this respect, Hungarian college education is far from that of Japan. In our case, the Budapest University of Science and Technology together sends ten college teacher candidates on study trips, each with one thousand forints. Our budget allocates twenty thousand krones annually for this purpose, while the*

[370] For exact data, see the separate, updated online list of Japanese travelers available at the following link: https://archive.org/details/utazok-osszesito-tablazat (accessed: 2026 July)
[371] *Budapest félszázados fejlődése*, 1925. p. 130.

Japanese government spends more than two million krones annually on foreign travel scholarships. This data can shed light on Japan's willingness to sacrifice for cultural purposes."[372]

The Japanese scholarship holders were also noticed by the Hungarian politician Kuno Klebelsberg (1875–1932), who later, as Minister of Public Education, developed and maintained Hungary's scholarship system financing foreign studies in the 1920s and 1930s. Klebelsberg met some Japanese students at foreign universities (e.g., in Berlin) in the 1890s, and from these encounters he realized that Japan's development was primarily due to the capital invested in higher education:

"*When I was here in Berlin 30 years ago, we spent six to seven hours at the university and then worked in the libraries. I met Japanese students and asked them how much they worked each day, and it turned out that they had strained themselves more than we did. When I asked them how they managed to do it, they replied that they were not here abroad on their own money, but that the Japanese state had sent them, after setting as its program that it would transform an Asian state into a modern great power, which needed leaders, especially those trained abroad. These students said that they felt they were being disloyal to their country if they did not serve the prosperity of their country with all their might.*"[373]

Japanese scholarships of the time were highly diverse in terms of benefits. For example, for medical studies, the Japanese Ministry of Education paid 150 yen per month for a two-year scholarship between 1900 and 1902 to a student sent to Europe – an amount sufficient only for very modest, almost minimal, living conditions. Military studies were funded at a higher rate; in this case, the monthly scholarship was 400 yen. It is worth briefly examining the support system for Japanese youth and officials studying abroad. The development of this system was of fundamental importance to the Japanese government, as it aimed to overcome scientific disadvantages, acquire practical knowledge, and eventually replace professors and specialists previously

[372] Dr. Papp Károly: *Két japán geológus Budapesten*, Vasárnapi Újság, 1904. February. Source: http://www.huszadikszazad.hu/ Translated by the Author.
[373] *Klebelsberg gróf kultuszminiszter háromnapos látogatása Berlinben*. Magyar Szemle, 1925. nov. 1.; Translated by the Author.

brought in from abroad at great expense. By studying abroad, students were expected to become ‘self-sufficient’ in science and technology, and to train their own personnel in the West in order to strengthen Japan in strategic areas. Applicants had to pass a strict pre-selection process, during which their academic progress and grades, conduct, and letters of recommendation were evaluated. Successful applicants were required to submit annual reports to local ambassadors. In addition, they were obliged to undertake two years of public service in a government office or university for each year of study abroad. From the beginning of the Meiji era, Japan institutionalized the dispatch of students abroad as part of its modern education policy. Starting with the "Overseas Students Regulations" in Meiji 3 (海外留学生規則, 1870), the government recognized the strategic importance of absorbing overseas knowledge. In 1875 (Meiji 8), under the system of Ministry of Education–sponsored students, the dispatch of students resumed and continued over the next decades, totaling 3,209 individuals and demonstrating that study abroad was a long-term component of Japan’s education policy rather than a temporary measure. The early phase, from 1875 to the mid-1890s, involved sending 10 to 20 students at a time, primarily to train Japanese teachers to replace foreign instructors at higher education institutions, especially Tokyo Imperial University. The Ministry of Education closely oversaw the selection of students, who were often appointed as professors upon their return. Around 1899, the system shifted: the University of Tokyo began recommending candidates to the Ministry, which then selected the top students. While the Ministry still assigned students to newly established imperial universities or specialized schools, the initiative increasingly moved to the university side, reflecting a gradual change in policy while maintaining the strategic goal of cultivating Japanese expertise through study abroad.[374] Based on contemporary statistics, James R. Bartholomew estimates that the budget spent on the education of 3,143 young Japanese students pursuing doctoral degrees between 1867 and 1914 was 5,467,350 yen. (The total number of Japanese students abroad between 1868 and 1895 may have been as high as 125,000.)[375] As for destination countries, Germany

[374] 直人辻「二十世紀初頭における文部省留学生の派遣実態とその変化についての一考察」In: 東京大学史紀要 26. 2008., p. 23.
[375] James R. Bartholomew: *The formation of science in Japan – Building a Research Tradition*, Yale Univ. Press, 1989., pp. 68-70.; Muraközy László: *A japán rejtély – Útteremtő csodák és végzetes zsákutcák*. Akadémiai Kiadó, 2016., p. 72.

ranked first, with 27% of students going there in the 1870s, 59% in 1880, and 69% in 1890. Britain and the U.S. were second, with 20–35% of students in the 1870s, but this proportion quickly fell to around 10–11% as studies in Germany became more popular. France was the third most common destination, though on average fewer than 7% of students went there. The remaining students studied in Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. James R. Bartholomew attributes Germany's undisputed advantage in this regard to the administrative simplicity of admission to German universities, the large number of institutions, and Germany's political popularity in Japan.[376] Data show that between 1868 and 1914, there were a total of 1,150 Japanese medical students in Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Switzerland alone. They constituted the largest subgroup of foreign students enrolled at the University of Berlin during that period.[377] Between 1862 and 1912, a total of 763 Japanese doctors studied medicine abroad. Their study periods averaged 4.1 years, though durations ranged widely from under 1 year to 24 years. The average age at departure was about 31–32 years, reflecting that most had already completed medical training in Japan and were seeking postgraduate education overseas. Most doctors (563) studied abroad for 3–5 years, using this time to deepen their medical knowledge. Only 95 doctors stayed for 2 years or less, and these were typically older practitioners (average age 35.5) pursuing second degrees or specialization. A smaller group (105) studied abroad for more than 5 years; these were younger men (around age 24) who completed much of their medical education abroad. The state financed 281 doctors, about 37% of the total, but state support declined over time – from nearly 89% before 1880 to about 32–40% thereafter. Still, the number of state-funded students continued to grow, doubling between 1880 and 1900 and again by 1912, reflecting the Meiji government's push to build a modern, Western-trained medical system. Privately funded doctors made up nearly two-thirds of all those who studied abroad. Among their

[376] James R. Bartholomew: *The formation of science in Japan – Building a Research Tradition*, Yale Univ. Press, 1989., pp. 70-72.
[377] Hoi-eun Kim: *Doctors of empire: medical and cultural encounters between Imperial Germany and Meiji Japan.* University of Toronto Press, 2014. p. 61.

preferred destinations, the University of Vienna's Faculty of Medicine was significant, hosting 32 privately funded Japanese doctors, or 9.3% of the total.[378]

Of course, many Japanese gained first-hand experience of Hungary and the Hungarians while visiting the territories of the Hungarian Crown and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The following chronology presents these travels. Japanese trips to Hungarian Kingdom were primarily organized group or professional study visits, as well illustrated by Adolf Ágai's remark in his 1909 work *Utazás Pestről – Budapestre (Travel from Pest to Budapest)*:

> *"Experts from far away came to the Hungarian capital to study and still do. I was curious to leaf through the guest book filled with the names of registered English, French, Dutch, Belgian, and German gentlemen. On one page, gentlemen from East Asia are also registered. From 1873 to 1903, almost every page showed Japanese visitors. The following gentlemen visited here: Kubota, Miyari, Makio, Kurakiki, Tsuno, Sivatora-Matkumura, and Yamane, all doctors who mostly received their degrees from German universities. This also serves to prove with what great zeal, almost greed, the sons of the yellow race acquired and shared the knowledge of the Europeans."*[379]

These group trips to Hungary had specific goals. One of the most important centers of knowledge transfer at the time were the international conferences held in various locations. Such professional gatherings also gave rise to what is now called 'conference tourism'. (Japanese participation in conferences held in Hungary can be traced back to the late 1890s.) The following section presents, year by year, the Japanese travelers and expatriates who sojourned in the Kingdom of Hungary between 1868 and 1913.

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[378] Pierre-Yves Donzé: *Studies Abroad by Japanese Doctors: A Prosopographic Analysis of the Nameless Practitioners, 1862–1912*. In: Social History of Medicine, Volume 23, Issue 2, August 2010, pp. 248–252. https://doi.org/10.1093/shm/hkp104

[379] Ágai Adolf: *Utazás Pestről – Budapestre 1843-1907. Rajzok és emlékek a magyar főváros utolsó 65 esztendejéből*. Bp., 1909., pp. 226-227. Translated by the Author.

1868

A Japanese acrobatic troupe performed at the *Budai Népszínház (People's Theatre of Buda)* between **January** 9 and 18.[380] The *Dragon Company (*kakubeijishi 角兵衛獅子, or Echigo-jishi 越後獅子; *Sárkány Társaság)*[381] took part in a European tour.

The Dragon Troupe photographed at a Vienna studio

1873

After the establishment of the Japanese legation in Vienna (1873), high-ranking Japanese officials frequently made a trip to Budapest. In the **summer** of 1873, a Japanese delegation tasked with studying police agencies and institutions visited Austria and Hungary as part of a study tour, supported by the Ministry of Justice. The members of the delegation were Toshiyoshi Kawaji (川路利良 1834–1879), Togama Kōno (河野敏鎌 1844–1895), Kawayoshi/Kawayasu Kishira (岸良兼養 1837–1883), Morikazu Numa (沼間守一 1844–1890), Taizō Namura (名村泰蔵 1840–1907), and Kazunori Masuda (益田克徳 1850–1903).[382]

[380] Réthy Lajos: *A japáni sárkánytársaság mutatványai.* Vasárnapi Újság, 1868. január 19. pp. 28-29.

[381] Kakubeijishi are traditional Japanese street acrobatics performed by young boys who execute handstands, somersaults, and group acts, accompanied by drumming from an adult leader. Originating in Echigo (modern Niigata Prefecture), the practice is said to have begun during the Edo Period when a former samurai named Kakubei taught acrobatics to his sons to help their village survive after repeated floods. Whether Kakubei truly existed is uncertain, but the performances – known for their impressive handstands – continue today. Kakubeijishi was part of a broader tradition of street and temple acrobatics in Japan, some of which later reached audiences abroad.

[382] Takanobu Koshitori's research: *Princess Atsu and the Vienna Philharmonic*. Source: homepage3.nifty.com/kosi/wien/up135/up135.html (accessed: 2013 May. Link no longer active.)

Between **October** 31 and November 9, Tsunetami Sano (佐野常民) and his delegation, who were visiting for the Vienna World Fair, spent time in Budapest as well. Contemporary reports note that the guests liked the city so much that they extended their stay by a day. They paid a visit to the Academy, where they were welcomed by members Vilmos Frankl and László Arany. They spent considerable time in the Eszterházy Gallery and viewed the *Sugárút* buildings and the Israelite Temple, where they were received by the community clerk. An interesting anecdote about the delegation has survived, concerning a visit to a cellar:

> "*Jálics and Co.'s firm, which had wrestled its way to world fame, drew the heart of His Excellency Sano Tsunetami to Király Street, where our Asian friends were greatly amused: in the darkness of the countless cellar catacombs, each visitor was given a long stick with a candle at its end, which they had to hold horizontally before them along its entire length as they wandered through the alleys of Egyptian-like darkness. The 'more patrio'*[383] *tasting of the wines of Eger and Buda, as well as the finest aszú wine, produced such a spirited atmosphere among the gentlemen – who were not much accustomed to the savor of genuine Hungarian wines – that Mr. Tsunetami himself began the series of toasts in the cellar's gloom, cheering Count Andrássy, Count Zichy, the Ministry of Commerce, and Hungarian hospitality. (...) Large quantities of both white and red wines were also ordered from Jálics. In any case, they concluded their period of revelry pleasantly, which they described as rich in experience, yet not without a small comical episode. They were warmly advised – after having examined everything with such thoroughness and intense interest (at the Ganz ironworks and the Óbuda shipyard they spent roughly six hours, one of them taking notes without pause) – to pay a visit to the magnificent slaughterhouse, the purpose of which the interpreter explained to His Excellency following the German word 'Schlachtbank'. The envoy, however, did not wish to participate in this excursion, firmly declaring that he found such cruel sights enjoyable only within tragedies. Presumably, he had understood some kind of execution site or gallows beneath the Oxen Tower, and he had no desire to witness the guillotining of poor laborers*

[383] from Latin, "in the manner of the fatherland"

or rapscallions. Even after his misunderstanding was clarified, he remarked that it would be better not to go there, lest some misfortune befall us."[384]

Contemporary reports reveal that the members of the delegation were H. Watanabe (?), the first secretary of the legation; Greeven G. A. (?); Korenao Ogata (緒方惟直 1853–1878); and N. Sanaki (?), the Japanese commissioners of the World Fair. They first paid their respects to the Minister of Trade, Jenő Zichy. Ministerial Secretary Ede Kvassay was entrusted with showing the guests the sights of the Hungarian capital. In addition to the locations mentioned above, they visited the Castle Palace, the National Casino, the National Theatre, the Redoute (ballroom), Margaret Island, and the Rácz Baths. Sanaki is said to have inquired with great interest about Hungarian social and political conditions and took extensive notes.[385]

1878

Around **November** 11, Japanese Prince Moriyoshi Nagaoka (長岡護美 1842–1906) and his entourage paid a visit to the Hungarian Minister of Justice, Ferenc Pulszky, as well as several institutions in Budapest. The prince hosted a luncheon in honor of his friends at the restaurant called the *Hunter's Horn (Vadászkürt Étterem)*, where he and his entourage were staying. Contemporary reports reveal that the young Japanese prince proceeded from Budapest to Rome on a diplomatic mission, but allegedly wished to return and marry in Hungary, as he had '*really come to like Hungarian ladies*'.[386]

1881

A Japanese lieutenant, Nobuyoshi Furukawa (?-?), and Japanese merchants traveled through Budapest on their way from Romania to Vienna.

1882

Around **July** 6, Secretary of State Masana Maeda (前田正名, 1850–1921) traveled to Europe on behalf of the Japanese government and arrived in Budapest as one of the stops on his tour. There, he first paid a visit to Minister Gábor Kemény and then, under

[384] Magyarország és a Nagyvilág, 1873-11-09 / 45. szám. Translated by the Author.
[385] Ellenőr, 1873-10-31 / 255. szám
[386] Ellenőr, 1878-11-11 / 568. szám

the guidance of the draftsman István Ottlik, toured the sample cellar, where he tasted Tokaji wine, which he ordered for the Vienna legation. He additionally explored the public museums, the *Vincellériskola (Viticulture School)* in Buda, and the Istvántelki Farm before continuing on to the Trieste exhibition.[387]

1884

Between 29 and 31 **October**, a Japanese military delegation visited Budapest. The ten-member delegation, consisting of high-ranking officials who inspected local military organizations and schools, was led by General Iwao Ōyama (大山巌 1842–1916), and their visit was recorded in the diary of General Michitsura Nozu (野津道貫 1840–1908), a politician.[388] According to the diary, the delegation left Vienna for Pest by train on Wednesday, 29 October 1884, under cloudy skies. The train departed at 3:30 in the afternoon, and they arrived in Pest at 9 o'clock in the evening, where they stayed at the Hotel Hungária. On 30 October, they were invited to an official reception and banquet by Emperor Franz Joseph, who was then in Pest. On Friday, 31 October 1884, in fine weather, Nozu and his delegation made a visit to the Ludovika Academy of the Royal Hungarian Army to see the center of Hungarian military education. Even Kálmán Mikszáth, a prominent Hungarian novelist and journalist, wrote a sketch about this visit:

> "*The King had been at home all week, which always makes a great show. Life in Buda and Gödöllő becomes quite effervescent. (…) Since the King has been here, he has received some interesting guests: the Japanese gentlemen, who came – so it is said – to study the Hungarian Honvéd army. And study they did – within two days. (It strikes me that there is already a hint of criticism in this.) Otherwise, the good Japanese examined every sight and departed in the manner of every visitor of the last fifty years, saying they were 'delighted'. Of course! After all, everything here is so very beautiful! During the Japanese visit, the amusing anecdote of Ferenc Pulszky was recalled: wishing to introduce reforms in religion as well, the Mikado instructed the delegation to look around Europe for a good religion. The delegation first reported from Hungary: 'Your Majesty! We*

[387] Fővárosi Lapok, 1882.07.06. 152. szám; the Trieste exhibition likely refers to the *Austro-Hungarian Industrial and Agricultural Exhibition* (1 August - 15 November 1882)
[388] 野津道貫『欧米巡回日誌』下, 巻之六,「墺匈国及仏英米ヲ経テ大西洋太平洋帰航之記」明19.6, 広島鎮台文庫

have found a religion with an infallible person, but he does not reside in the country. This will suit us'. Hardly had the Mikado received this relay letter when, a few hours later, another arrived: 'Your Majesty! Decide nothing. We have found another, better religion, for all its members are infallible'. From this, anyone may judge that they certainly visited the Academy and there discovered the Calvinist lot's faith. The Japanese gentlemen themselves (whom His Majesty received very cordially) are cheerful, pleasant, and intelligent. They wear uniforms nearly identical to the French officer's, differing scarcely at all from European gentlemen, save for the peculiar cut of their eyes, which gives their faces a foreign look. For so small a difference, it is surely not worth being born on the other side of the globe!"[389]

On Saturday, 1 November, they departed from Pest in pleasant weather. They checked out of the hotel at half past one in the afternoon and returned to Vienna by train before seven in the evening. The diary contains very few personal experiences; detailed descriptions and statistics concerning military organizations and institutions clearly dominate it. Approximately ten pages are devoted to Hungary. In addition to professional accounts, the author highlights the results of Hungarian horse breeding and briefly writes about the hussars. In a Hungarian article, it is also noted that the Japanese Minister of Railways and Post was a member of the delegation.[390]

1885

Between 16 and 25 **January**, Morimasa Takei (武井守正 1842–1926), the national chief forester, and his secretary, Tokuzō Takashima (高島徳三 1850–1931), a botanist, spent more than a week in Hungary. The purpose of their visit was to learn about the Hungarian forestry industry and its organization. Their one-week stay was preceded by a series of short official visits, during which Takei personally met the Minister of Agriculture, Pál Széchenyi, and the national chief forester, Albert Kálnoki Bedő, on 5 January. Takei's visit was recorded in detail in a contemporary article, allowing us to see

[389] Mikszáth Kálmán: *A hét története*, 1884. nov. 8.; In: Cikkek és karcolatok II. http://mek.oszk.hu/00900/00901/ (accessed: 2025 Sept.) Translated by the Author.
[390] The article mentions a certain name, 'Mianza'. Fővárosi Lapok, 1884-10-28 / 253. szám

the program of their days in Hungary.[391] Takei and his secretary arrived in Budapest from Vienna on the evening of 16 January and stayed at the Hungária Hotel. The next morning they paid a visit to the Ministry of Agriculture and met with the Hungarian National Chief Forester, Kálnoki, who introduced them to the ministry's forestry departments. That same day they visited the construction site of the National General Exhibition in City Park and viewed the forestry pavilion under construction. They spent the afternoon in the Royal Castle and the evening at the opera. Later, the Hungarian forestry officers hosted a reception in their honor at the Frohner Hotel. On 18 January, they traveled in a special salon car of the Hungarian Royal State Railways to Selmec, the Forestry Academy, where they examined the academy's collection and the botanical garden. The following day was also spent at the academy, attending lectures and conducting an on-site forest inspection. On 20 January, they traveled to Liptóújvár to study the budget of the Main Forestry Office, the work of local forest stewards, and the Liptóújvár (today: Liptovský Hrádok, Slovakia) tannin and tanning factory, which processed tree bark. On 22 January, they made a trip to Besztercebánya (today: Banská Bystrica, Slovakia) to observe professional forestry operations. There, the Hungarian hosts demonstrated charcoal burning to the Japanese guests. The two-member delegation returned to Budapest on 24 January and took a group photo with the Hungarian forestry experts. That same day, they toured the *Műcsarnok (Art Hall)* and the *Iparművészeti Múzeum (Museum of Applied Arts)*, where they spoke appreciatively of the Japanese collections,[392] and the evening was spent at the Opera House, where *Bánk Bán*[393] was performed. The day concluded with a reception hosted by forestry officers at the Frohner Hotel. Takei and Takashima returned to Vienna on the morning of 25 January.

Between **July** and August, the Japanese *Torikata* group was a guest in Budapest, at the *Kolozsvár* (today: Cluj-Napoca, Romania) *Summer Theater*, and at the *Nagyvárad* (today: Oradea, Romania) *Summer Theater*. The troupe consisted of seven

[391] Kálnoki Bedő Albert: *A japáni országos főerdőmester Magyarországon*. In: Erdészeti Lapok, 1885. január., pp. 76-81.
[392] Alföldi Iparlap, 1885.01.31. 5. szám
[393] Bánk Bán is a Hungarian opera by Ferenc Erkel (1861), based on a historical drama about a 13th-century Hungarian nobleman torn between loyalty to the king and his personal tragedy. It is considered a national classic of Hungarian opera.

or eight Japanese artists, including dancers and other performers. Contemporary reports from Budapest describe this Japanese performance troupe, directed by impresario Arbré, as drawing large audiences in venues such as the German Theater and City Park. The performances featured sensational acts, including acrobatic feats on a wire without a balancing pole, ladder-balancing tricks, and choreographed scenes such as a performer chasing butterflies with a fan.[394]

Around **August** 9, Kiyonori Kashimura (樫村清徳 1847-1902), a Japanese doctor and university professor, spent time in Budapest. He attended the national exhibition and visited medical and public health institutions, the Rókus Hospital, and its autopsy room.[395]

1886

In this year, one of the pioneers of Japanese pharmacy, Keizō Funami (舟波敬三 1854–1927), conducted research at the University of Budapest. In the same year, the writer and politician Koyata Torio (鳥尾小彌太1848–1905) also stayed in Budapest.

A six-member Japanese delegation, led by Tateki Tani (谷干城 1837–1911), the Minister of Agriculture, traveled through Hungary between **July** 7 and 21 as part of a professional study tour.[396] The delegation included a ministerial secretary, an artillery lieutenant, a university professor, and the Japanese attaché.[397] Tani was dispatched to Europe to study local economic and agricultural conditions with his entourage, in addition to attending Stein's classes[398] in Vienna. The Vasárnapi Újság reported on the visit:

> "*The Japanese immediately set about seriously inspecting public institutions and also examined the Kőbánya pig farm, which is unique in its kind. On Sunday, they set off for Mezőhegyes to inspect the stud farm and treasury farm. (…) From*

[394] Fővárosi Lapok 1885-08-12.; Magyar Polgár, 1885-07-09., 1885-07-16., 1885-07-21.; Pesti Hírlap, 1885-05-31. The group's name appears in the articles as "*Torikatta*".
[395] Nemzet, 1885-08-09 / 1054. szám
[396] Based on Tani's diary. Quoted by: 鈴木栄樹「駐伊公使時代の田中不二麿と訪伊日本人たち : 明治中期における日本人政治家のイタリア<観光>」In:『立命館言語文化研究』20(2), 立命館大学, 2008., p. 31.
[397] The sources mention these persons: R. Hida *secrétaire du ministre de l'Agriculture du Japon*; Mourato *Lieutenant d'artillerie de Japon*; H. Danko *l'attaché du ministre de Japon*; Tamba *university teacher*; Budapesti Hirlap, 1886.07.14., Fővárosi Lapok, 1886.07.14.
[398] Lorenz von Stein, a prominent 19th-century German political economist and sociologist. He lectured at the University of Vienna and had a notable influence on Japanese modernization during the Meiji era

Mezőhegyes they traveled to Bánhegyes. Before leaving, they examined the exterior and interior of a Hungarian peasant house. In Bánhegyes (…) they wanted to become acquainted with Hungarian smallholder conditions, so they visited the farms of the better-off farmers in turn. Having thus completed their inspection tours of the Great Plain, they boarded the train at Kovácsháza and traveled to Selmeczbánya[399].”[400]

Together with his entourage, he spent time at *Budai Vincellériskola (Viticulture School of Buda)*, exploring the institute's vineyards and orchards before moving on to the Ludovika Academy.[401] On the 11th, they arrived in Mezőhegyes in a separate saloon car, where they were received by Colonel Ehrenberger of the stud farm and Director Glusek. After brunch, they toured the stud farm. In the afternoon, they went to the casino, traveled by carriage to the farms, and observed the Hungarian cattle herd. They paid an extended visit to the local beet-spirit factory. The delegation examined the furnishings of a Hungarian farmhouse before continuing to Bánhegyes, where they were guided by a servant named Babo.[402] On July 15, they visited the National Museum, where their names were entered in the Deák Room's book of remembrance.[403] Following the official visit, a report was published portraying Hungary as a civilized, progressive country, a step ahead of Japan. The few-page text focused primarily on agricultural issues and statistics, but also highlighted specific fields such as Hungarian horse and pig breeding.[404] Concerning the delegation's cultural interests, one article noted: "*Secretary Hida, a short, dark-faced man, also went to the theater, but only saw*

[399] today Banská Štiavnica, located in Slovakia
[400] *Japáni vendégek*, Vasárnapi Újság, XXXIII. évf.,29. szám, 1886. júl. 18. p. 473. Translated by the Author.
[401] Borászati Lapok, 1886.07.16. 14. sz.; Fővárosi Lapok, 1886.07.14.
[402] Budapesti Hirlap, 1886.07.14.
[403] There is no precise information about the members of the delegation in the Hungarian article, only their surnames and positions are mentioned, e.g.: "*Ministerial Secretary Hida*", "*Danko, attaché of the Japanese embassy in Vienna*". For the supposed members of the delegation, see: Takanobu Koshitori's research: *Princess Atsu and the Vienna Philharmonic* Source: homepage3.nifty.com/kosi/wien/up29/up29.html; ill.: homepage3.nifty.com/kosi/wien/up145/up145.html (accessed: 2014 May, link no longer available)
[404] 欧米巡回取調書, 6 瑞墺匈蘭陸伊英北米合衆国之部, 特報第九号　匈牙利国農工業ノ概況, 農商務省, 1888.

The Devil's Pills,[405] *which he did not particularly enjoy; he mentioned with regret that he would not be able to see Hungarian folk theater.*"[406]

1887

The Japanese bacteriologist Shibasaburō Kitasato (北里柴三郎 1853–1931) came to Budapest – he would later visit the Hungarian capital again in 1909 – where he was '*captivated by the thermal baths*'. On his first trip to Budapest, he was accompanied by the immunologist Tōichirō Nakahama (中浜東一郎 1857–1937).

In the same year, the politician and poet Sakura Maruyama (丸山作樂 1840–1899) was also in Budapest.

Around **May** 15, the pharmacist Keizō Tanba (丹波敬三 1854–1927) investigated ptomains[407] in the polluted well water of Budapest, after being invited by József Fodor, president of the National Public Health Association and Hungary's first authority on public health.[408]

Around **July** 23, a 15-member Japanese delegation led by Count Yoritsumu Arima (有馬頼萬 1864–1927) arrived in Budapest. Based on contemporary reports, they came via Trieste and stayed at the Hotel Hungária. After a few days, they continued on to Berlin.[409]

1888

Between **August** 2-5, the *Mitsuta* group performed as a guest at the *Nagyváradi Nyári Színkör (Oradea Summer Theater)*.

[405] The *Devil's Pills (Ördög pirulái)* was a 19th-century theatrical farce, originally written in French by Anicet Bourgeois and Laurent, and later translated into Hungarian for performance at the Népszínház in Buda. The three-act production, featuring songs, dances, and spectacle, was part of contemporary entertainment culture and achieved notable financial success.
[406] Fővárosi Lapok, 1886.07.14.
[407] Ptomains are toxic nitrogenous compounds formed by bacterial decomposition of proteins. In the 19th century, they were studied as possible causes of food- and waterborne illnesses, making research on ptomains important for understanding spoiled food, contaminated water, and early public health measures. In the 21st century, ptomains are no longer considered major disease agents.
[408] Orvosi Hetilap, 1887-05-15 / 20. szám p. 34.
[409] Budapesti Hirlap 1887.07.24.; Ország-Világ, 1887-04-02 / 14. szám. Nothing more is known about the members of the company, the news reports mention three more names: Secretary *Podjo*, Lady *Sananingo*, Miss *Bagawa*

1889

An official delegation stayed in Budapest on **May** 28–29. The leader of the five-member group, which examined European military systems, was the politician, Minister of the Interior, and later Prime Minister Aritomo Yamagata (山縣有朋 1838–1922). Accompanying him were, among others, Foreign Secretary Keiroku Tsuzuki (都筑馨六 1861–1923) and Dr. Tsuruto Kako (賀古鶴所 1855–1931), a military physician specializing in otolaryngology (ear, nose, and throat diseases). The visit was reported by *Vasárnapi Újság* as follows:

> "*The company has taken an apartment in the Hungária Hotel. They all wear European clothes and speak French well. The delegation wanted to spend a longer time in Budapest, but the next day they received a telegram from Vienna, and as a result they returned. During their short stay, they also visited the Museum of Commerce located in the Industrial Hall in the City Park, where they spent an hour and bought a whole bunch of special Hungarian objects.*"[410]

Between **December** 9–13, the *Kamaritz/Karamitz/Kamakitz (?)* Group was a guest at the Debrecen City Theatre.

1890

Between **September** 23–27, three Japanese scholarship holders, sent by the Japanese government to study in Germany and Austria in 1887, visited Budapest to examine Hungarian institutions. Their main task in the Kingdom of Hungary was to study medical and judicial institutions. Two of the three were doctors, and the third was a lawyer. The doctors were Dr. Masatsugu Yamane (山根正次 1858–1925), a forensic medical lecturer at the Japanese Ministry of Justice, and Dr. Ainosuke Suzuki (鈴木愛之助 1861–1928), a gynecologist and physician to the Japanese imperial family. The lawyer accompanying them was Dr. Kosaburō Kishi (岸小三郎 1857–1902). The *Vasárnapi Újság* reported on their visit as follows:

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[410] *Japán küldöttség Budapesten*, Vasárnapi Újság, XXXVI. évf., 22. szám, 1889. jún. 2., 358. o. The other members of the delegation have not yet been identified, they are listed in the Hungarian article with the following names: „*Jerozoka*", „*dr. Egutschi*". Translated by the Author.

"*The Japanese guests (…) devoted a longer time to viewing the new forensic medicine institute, since the Japanese government wants to build a similar institute in Tokyo. They looked at the physiology and chemistry institute and also wandered over to Margaret Island. They also carefully examined the courthouse, the public slaughterhouse, and the brewery and piggery in Kőbánya.*"[411]

Another interesting fact about the visit is that the writer Shirō Shiba (柴四郎 1852-1922) was also with the delegation. The Japanese writer personally met Lajos Kossuth in Turin, whom he later depicted in a novel.[412]

1891

Cavalry Colonel Manabu Nishibata (西端学 ?-1934) arrived in Bábolna with several others[413] to study the organizational structure of Hungarian horse policy, explore the relationship between the ministry and the stud farms, and examine the role of Hungarian stud farms (Bábolna, Kisbér, Fogaras, Mezőhegyes). An official report in Japanese about this visit was written several years later.[414]

Koreaki Kamei (亀井茲明 1861–1896) may have undertaken a journey to Hungary in **July**, but almost nothing is known about his trip; only a single photo album survives, which he presumably purchased in Budapest.

1892

On **August** 24–25, the Japanese businessman Kumashiro Watanabe (渡辺熊四郎 1840–1907) traveled from Vienna to Budapest, about which he wrote a few brief lines in his diary, noting only that he stayed at the Hotel Pannonia and that "*Hungary is a completely independent country where Hungarians use their native language*".[415]

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[411] *Japán vendégek*, Vasárnapi Újság, XXXVII. évf., 39. szám, 1890. szept. 28., pp. 633-634.; On the 24th, they visited the courthouse, and on the 25th, they went to the public slaughterhouse and the brewery and piggery in Kőbánya. Budapesti Hirlap, 1890.09.24. 263. Szám. Translated by the Author.

[412] For more information on Shirō Shiba and Kossuth, see Chapter Five.

[413] Tokunaga Yasumoto. *'A magyar-japán kultúrkapcsolatok rövid története*' In: Keletkutatás, 1988 ősz, Kőrösi Csoma Társaság, pp. 78-81. Tokunaga found Ballagi Mór's Hungarian-German dictionary in a Japanese antiquarian bookshop, which had a handwritten entry in Japanese: "*I bought this dictionary in Bábolna in 1891. Nishibata Manabu*".

[414] 西端学『日本馬匹改良指針』高橋正照 Tottori-ken, 1898.

[415] 渡辺熊四郎『欧米旅行記』明治27, pp. 145-146. Translated by the Author.

1894

Between **March** 20–23, Shōgo Nagasaki (長崎省吾 1850–1937) journeyed to Budapest as an official guest, where he was guided by Ryōtarō Hata (畑良太郎 1867–1937), secretary of the Japanese legation in Vienna. They stayed at the Grand Hotel Hungária, visited the National Museum on the 21st, and spent most of their time sightseeing.[416]

Later that year, from **September** 2–10, the 8th International Congress of Public Health and Demography was held in Budapest. Yoshizumi Tawara (田原良純 1855–1935), a pharmacist who had previously studied in Germany for two years, attended the conference.

1896

Around **June** 15–16, Imperial Prince Sadanaru Fushiminomiya (伏見宮貞愛親王 1858–1923) and his entourage – Japanese minister Kogorō Takahira (高平小五郎 1854–1926) and his wife; journalist Sohō Tokutomi (德富蘇峰 1863–1957); banker Eigo Fukai (深井英五 1871–1945); Embassy Secretary Ryōtarō Hata (畑良太郎 1867–1937); and three other Japanese military experts – traveled to Budapest as guests of the Hungarian Millennium celebrations.[417] On the afternoon of the 15th, the guests toured the Millennium Exhibition, where they were welcomed and guided by the exhibition management. On the 16th, they were personally received by Franz Joseph. The king assigned General Staff Major Frigyes Eckhardt to assist the delegation, and the next day they attended a court lunch with Foreign Minister Goluchovszky, Prime Minister Baron Bánffy, and other dignitaries.[418]

On **June** 21, Japanese journalists spent time in Hungary during the celebrations of the thousandth anniversary of the Hungarian conquest. Contemporary newspapers report that two journalists arrived in Budapest from Moscow, accompanied by Russian colleagues: Chisen Asahina (朝比奈知泉 1862–1939) and Kotarō Mochizuki (望月小太郎

[416] 長崎省吾『欧米巡回日誌』1894. (manuscript)
[417] Budapesti Hirlap 1896.06.16. 165. szám; the report also mentions: *Japanese Marshal Yamagota, Lieutenant Colonel Nehara, Lieutenant Count Hisamatu*. See also: Kővári László: *A Millenium lefolyásának története és a Millenáris emlékalkotások*, 1897. p. 310.; The *Millennium Exhibition* in Budapest was part of Hungary's national celebrations marking the 1000th anniversary of the Magyar conquest of the Carpathian Basin. Staged in City Park, it presented Hungary's history, culture, industry, and sciences, with numerous pavilions and monuments. Several lasting landmarks were created for the event, including the Vajdahunyad Castle complex and the continent's first metro line, the Millennium Underground.
[418] Budapesti Hírlap 1896.06.16. 165. szám

1866–1927).[419] Asahina met, among others, the Minister of Finance, Benjámin Kállay, and became acquainted with Adolf Strausz, a professor at the *Keleti Kereskedelmi Akadémia (Oriental Academy of Commerce)*. Mochizuki received high-level recommendations from Vienna and paid a visit to Jenő Rákosi, the president of the *Otthon Írók és Hírlapírók Köre (The Circle of Writers and Journalists of Otthon)*. He left his name in the Otthon registry in Japanese.[420]

Also in **June**, Kenjirō Den (田健治郎 1855–1930), an official who later became head of the Japanese Ministry of Information and Telecommunications, arrived with his delegation to attend the International Telegraph Conference held in Hungary. The Japanese delegation, led by Den, stayed at the Grand Hotel Royal in Budapest and continued on to Bucharest on July 28, 1896.

In **November**, Sohō Tokutomi (德富蘇峰 1863–1957), a publicist and later an advisor to the Ministry of the Interior, and Eigo Fukai (深井英五 1871–1945), a banker who later became Director General of the National Bank of Japan, paid another visit to Budapest for a few days. During their short stay, they met Ármin Vámbéry (1832–1913), the eminent Hungarian Turkologist,[421] attended the Millennium Exhibition, and its closing ceremony.

1897

At the end of **May**, Sōsuke Niiyama (新山荘輔 1856–1930), a veterinarian and official of the Japanese Horse Office (baseikan, 馬政官), accompanied by a stud farm inspector and a secretary, toured key sites of Hungarian horse breeding. They toured Mezőhegyes, Bábolna, and the Kisbér stud farm to obtain breeding material, as six years earlier the three stallions purchased from the Bábolna stud farm had “achieved extraordinary results”. During this visit, they purchased four stallions from Bábolna at an average price of 2,500 Forints, and two stallions from the Gidran stud farm in Mezőhegyes at an average price of 3,000 Forints.[422]

[419] The articles are: Vasárnapi Újság 1896. júl. 12., pp. 462-463. ; Új Idők 1896. júl. 5. p. 7.; A Hét 1896. júl. 5., p. 477.; Pesti Napló 1896. jún. 23., p. 6.
[420] Fővárosi Lapok, 1896-05-19
[421] Senga Toru: *Tokutomi Sohó, Vámbéry Ármin és a millenáris Magyarország*. Századok, 128., 1994. pp. 708-709.
[422] Vadász- és Versenylap 1897.05.26. 37. szám. Also mentioned as members of the delegation are: *E. Onoutchi, Chief Stud Inspector, and Nisawada, Secretary.*

Around **December** 11, a geologist named *Koschibe*, described in a contemporary article as the director of the Imperial Japanese Geological Survey in Tokyo, stayed in Budapest during his European tour. While in the city, he inspected institutions related to his profession.[423]

1898

A politician-poet, Nichinan Fukumoto (福本日南 1857-1921), visited Budapest.

1899

Around **September** 12, Asatarō Okada (岡田朝太郎 1868–1936), a young professor at the University of Tokyo and a lawyer, attended the Budapest Congress of Criminal Justice (the eighth general assembly of the International Criminal Justice Association) as the only Japanese delegate.[424]

In **December**, one of Japan's most famous merchants, Kahei Ōtani (大谷嘉兵衛 1845–1933) – also known as the 'king of the Japanese tea industry' – was sent to America to negotiate the abolition of the high tariff on Japanese tea. During his trip, he stayed in Budapest for two days, on December 10–11; his diary is discussed in more detail in this chapter.[425] He was accompanied by the secretary of the Yokohama Chamber of Commerce, Takenosuke Furuya (古谷竹之助 1867–?). Based on a contemporary article, they spent considerable time in the office of the Budapest Chamber of Commerce and Industry, where Chamber Secretary Fritz provided them with information about the organization and operation of chambers of commerce and industry, as well as other institutions.[426]

[423] Pesti Napló, 1897-12-11 / 343. szám
[424] Pesti Napló, 1899-09-12 / 253. szám, 1899-09-13 / 254. szám
[425] 大谷嘉兵衛『欧米漫遊日誌』, 1900.
[426] Pesti Napló 1899.12.12.

1900

Although the exact date is unknown, Imperial Cavalry Major Motohiko Nagayama (?–?) visited the Hungarian Royal State Stud Farm at Mezőhegyes, as recorded in the stud farm's guest book.[427]

Sometime between 1900 and 1902, a Japanese doctor, Kaitarō Sakata (坂田快太郎 1865–1931), who was studying in Berlin, made trips to Hungary and Austria.[428]

From 1900 to 1902, Shōnen Matsumura (松村松年 1872–1960), the father of Japanese entomology, worked in the zoology department of the Hungarian National Museum. He later gained great fame in his profession in Japan. Matsumura was sent to Germany by the Japanese government in 1899 to study entomology. While still in Japan, he learned about the internationally recognized Hungarian entomologist Géza Horváth, who later took him under his wing and taught him at the museum's zoological collection about the so-called *sucking insects* (*true bugs, Hemiptera*). The museum's *Hemiptera* collection still contains some of Matsumura's original special prints, which he dedicated to Horváth. Horváth's insect collecting diary also survives, describing where he and Matsumura conducted their fieldwork.[429] What Matsumura learned from Horváth had a profound influence on his career. Judging from their correspondence, they must have had a very good professional and friendly relationship: the Japanese scientist regularly sent insects to Horváth by post, who identified them and sent them back to Japan, with part of the consignment preserved in the zoological collection. Based on one of Matsumura's letters in English, it can be assumed that their relationship began long before his trip to Europe.[430] In a letter, dated January 1899, Matsumura expressed his hope to be sent abroad, primarily to Germany, on a three-year scholarship to study entomology, and that he would have the opportunity to meet Horváth in Hungary. After Matsumura's arrival, Horváth gave a lecture at the zoology department of the Royal Hungarian Natural History Society on the state of Japanese entomology, in which he introduced and described Matsumura's works in detail. The Japanese scientist stayed in

[427] https://www.menesbirtok.hu/a-meidzsi-reform-es-a-magyar-kiralyi-allami-menesbirtok/ (accessed: 2019 Jan.) Source: Mezőhegyesi Helytörténeti Gyűjtemény
[428] homepage3.nifty.com/kosi/wien/up98/up98.html (accessed: 2013 May; link no longer available)
[429] Following the kind communication of museologist Dávid Rédei.
[430] Matsumura's letters to Horváth are included in the Horváth legacy in the History of Science Library of the Hungarian Museum of Natural History. Inventory number: 50.

Budapest, with short interruptions, until 1902. *Rovartani Lapok* reported on his return home as follows:

> "*Dr. Matzumura (...) returned to his homeland on September 1. During his stay, he won the goodwill of Hungarian zoologists to a great extent and felt entirely at home; he had even acquired a considerable command of our language. On the occasion of his departure, officials of the zoological department of the National Museum, entomologists from Budapest, and other friends appeared at the Keleti Railway Station to bid him farewell. On behalf of those present, Dr. Géza Horváth (...) addressed warm words of farewell to the departing scientist, first in Hungarian and then in Japanese. Matzumura, moved, replied and concluded his speech in Japanese with the following Hungarian words: 'Gentlemen! I sincerely thank you for your kind friendship, which I will never forget. May God bless you and beautiful Hungary! Long live the Hungarians!' These words were met with enthusiastic applause. After a few more friendly embraces and handshakes, the express train carried the Japanese scientist away from us, who would surely take with him the best impressions and memories to his distant homeland, which he would reach only after two months of travel.*"[431]

Matsumura deserves attention not only for his professional activities but also for his personal connections: he may have personally known several figures in the history of Hungarian–Japanese relations. The names of Benedek Balogh Barátosi and Kurakichi Shiratori (白鳥庫吉 1865–1942)[432] also appear in his letters, and he occasionally served as an interpreter when the Japanese actress Sadayakko (川上貞奴 1871–1946) and her husband, Otojirō Kawakami (川上音二郎 1864–1911) toured Hungary in 1902. His correspondence with the Hungarian entomologist Géza Horváth can be traced as late as 1909. The friendship between the two scholars, which extended beyond their professional relationship, is unique in this early stage of Hungarian–Japanese relations.

Around **June** 4–6, 1900, the Japanese imperial prince Kotohito Kan'innomiya (閑院宮載仁親王 1865–1945) and his five-person entourage traveled across Hungary, which included Tomotsune Iwakura (岩倉具経 ?–?) who was described as the Mikado's privy

[431] Rovartani Lapok, 1902. 9. évf. 6. sz. p. 152. Translated by the Author.
[432] For more on Shiratori, see: Chapter Five

councilor and chief chamberlain.[433] On the 5th, they toured the capital, then traveled to Kisbér, where they visited the state stud farm accompanied by Minister Darányi. A separate saloon car was provided for them. Among those accompanying the delegation were Péter Szapáry, departmental councilor; Count Kálmán Nákó; and Lieutenant General Durmann, inspector of state horse breeding. An article notes that Kan'innomiya spoke excellent English and French, and describes him as follows: "*his strong torso is poorly matched by his small, childishly round and smooth head, with a clean-shaven chin and a thin, coal-black mustache*". Iwakura, too, received a less flattering remark from the reporter, being described as "*a rather insignificant figure*".[434] On the occasion of the Kisbér visit, the Minister of Agriculture officially assigned Péter Szapáry, as class advisor, to accompany the prince. They spent time in Bábolna, where Mihály Hedad El Fadlallah guided them around the site. In Kisbér, they were received by stud commander Gyula Deső and economic manager Godofréd Bendl. In Budapest, the delegation stayed at the Hotel Hungária.

During the 1900 Paris World Exhibition, the director of a Kyoto manufactory (陶磁器試験所) had taken notice of Hungarian Zsolnay ceramics[435] during his European study tour. This interest culminated in a factory visit to Pécs on **August** 29, 1900, when the director, Nagataka Fujie (藤江永孝 1865–1915), and the ceramist Sōbei Kinkōzan (錦光山宗兵衛 1868–1927), came to Hungary.[436] (A Zsolnay vase with eosin glaze is still preserved in Fujie's collection.).

Also in **August** 1900, Chief Forestry Advisor Taizan Shiga (志賀泰山 1854–1934), who was staying in Vienna, paid a visit to the National Forestry Association for a brief forestry study tour.[437]

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[433] Pesti Napló, 1900.06.06. 153. szám; Based on the article, they were accompanied by: *Master of Ceremonies Matsui, Lieutenant Colonel Oshima, Colonel Fujii, Chief of Staff, and the prince's butler*.
[434] Pesti Napló, 1900.06.06. 153. Szám. Translated by the Author.
[435] Based in the city of Pécs, Zsolnay was Hungary's most celebrated ceramic manufactory and a regular prize-winner at world's fairs, where it symbolized the country's artistic and industrial achievements. Its pioneering eosin glaze – an iridescent, shimmering finish developed in the 1890s – made its art pottery internationally famous and highly collectible across Europe and the United States.
[436] Kiss Sándor: *A szaggatott magyar-japán kereskedelmi kapcsolatok krónikája*. In: Tanulmányok a magyar-japán kapcsolatok történetéből, 2009. ELTE Eötvös Kiadó., p. 324.: Takanobu Koshitori's research: *Princess Atsu and the Vienna Philharmonic* Source: homepage3.nifty.com/kosi/wien/up51/up51.html and homepage3.nifty.com/kosi/wien/up120/up120.html (Accessed: 2013 May; link no longer available)
[437] Erdészeti Lapok 1900. 39. évf. 9. füzet, p. 816.

In the **summer** of 1900, Otova Ōhasi (大橋乙羽 1869–1901), a writer, newspaper editor, and publisher, made a trip to Budapest. He was something of a character, with a keen sense of humor who also wrote travel books. Unfortunately, only a few pages from his visit to Budapest – which he made during his around-the-world trip – have survived, and the exact date is unknown. The short text contains interesting insights, which make it worth reading. Ōhasi traveled to Budapest after visiting the 1900 Paris World Exhibition. Upon arrival, he was struck by the rapid development that had taken place in the city in recent years. He came from Vienna on an evening train that stopped at every small station, where intoxicated men got on and off. The noise was so loud that he could not sleep at all during the more than seven-hour journey. Exhausted and sleepless, he threw himself into the bustling city, which may explain why his first impressions were somewhat negative. His first stop was a bookstore, where he bought a map, only to realize later that it was an old edition published twenty years earlier. During his sightseeing, he did not miss the museums: he visited both the National Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts. He found Budapest busier and more lively than Vienna, although he noted that the city's bustle reminded him of the colonial section of the Paris World Exhibition. Ōhasi also had experiences he described as *indescribable*, particularly on Margaret Island, where he spent half a day. During this time, he felt completely freed from the depression of everyday life. He went to the Margaret Island spa and admired the beauty and selfless work ethic of the girls employed there. He almost entirely lost himself in observing the young, attractive couples strolling on the island, picking flowers, and lounging in love. The most interesting part of his text concerns the Hungarian people:

> "*There is no one else with a more autonomous nature than these people. Even though they belong to Austria, they are treated like customers in a shop, and if we exclude politics and military affairs, they have independence in all other areas. Therefore, the phrase 'Hungarian Royal' flourishes in the names of all state institutions, railway stations, post offices, and others, as if to say that these places here do not belong to the Austrian ruling family.*"[438]

[438] 大橋乙羽『欧米小観』, 博文館, 明34.7, p. 105. Translated by the Author

According to Ōhasi, Hungarians make up more than half of the population, so their influence is growing. He believed that in a few decades, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy would inevitably collapse and that the Hungarian people would be able to raise the flag of independence in Budapest. In this endeavor, he considered the Hungarians to be diligent, intelligent, and passionate about their country.

Kiyosuke Awadzu (粟津清亮 1871–1959), who was the secretary general of the first Japanese insurance company and undertook a two-year study trip at the company's expense, spent some time in Budapest, most probably around **October–November** 1900. He came to Hungary after attending the World Exhibition in Paris, where he had become interested in Hungary. In Budapest, he met with Andor Kozma, an official (later secretary general) of the First Hungarian General Insurance Company, who wrote in detail about their meeting:

> "*A small, delicate, black-haired man entered, wearing an impeccable Franz Joseph coat. (…) This is a Japanese man. I had never dealt with a person of this kind, but I had seen plenty of them in circuses, orpheums, and in pictures. (…) He introduced himself in quite competent German. (…) I was amazed at the little Japanese gentleman. After all, he thinks, reasons, and judges much like a more educated Hungarian. I was particularly pleased that he understood and analyzed, without any explanation, even a bitterly mocking yet appreciative Hungarian statement about the Germans. We soon became very good friends and eagerly exchanged our ideas. (…) Mr. Awadzu was completely initiated into Hungarian common law within five minutes.*"[439]

Andor Kozma explained to Awadzu about Ferenc Deák, the Austro-Hungarian dualism, and "*the assertion of the Hungarian nation within this framework*". Later, Awazu sent him two books for Christmas: one written by Awadzu himself, and the other was a German edition of an illustrated Japanese poetry anthology. The two corresponded for many years, with Awadzu sending Kozma, for example, photographs of himself, his wife, and his child.[440]

[439] Magyar Nemzet, 1901-01-06 / 6. Szám. Translated by the Author.
[440] Az Ujság, 1905-06-17 / 167. szám

Between **October** 22–24, a Japanese literary scholar and poet, Yoshikata Ikebe (池辺義象 1861–1923), journeyed to Budapest in the company of two high-ranking Japanese officials[441] after attending the Paris World Exhibition. They went to the university, where they were received on behalf of the law students' scientific association by President Marschan, Vice-President Gönczy, and Second Secretary Királyfi. They toured the rooms and the ballroom, and then went to the Institute of Geography, where Jenő Cholnoky[442] received them and '*provided various booklets*'. They went to the dean's office of the law faculty, the bursar's office, and the University Circle, and concluded their tour with a visit to the National Museum.[443] Ikebe and his companions spent a memorable afternoon in the *Japán Kávéház (Café Japan)* on October 24, 1900 – this visit and Ikebe's diary are discussed in more detail in this chapter.

Around **November** 28, Yoshikiyo Koganei (小金井良精 1859–1944), a professor of anatomy at the University of Tokyo, was in Budapest and spent time in the Institute of Anatomy No. II at the Budapest University of Science. He was accompanied by Dr. Polacsek and Dr. Thanhoffer, who showed him the institute, including their own preparations that had been presented at the Paris Exhibition, as well as their carved plaster models made for teaching purposes. Koganei inspected the dissecting room, accompanied by Dr. Tellyesnitzky, an assistant professor. A contemporary article recorded a witty comment made by Koganei:

> "*When the Japanese guest entered the study room, two young female medical students were diligently studying muscles and bones. The Japanese professor noted with a smile that civilization had not yet reached them that far, and that the girls there were still only dissecting in the kitchen.*"[444]

[441] Budapesti Hírlap, 1900-10-24 / 292. szám. The article mentions *Kamei E., the President of the Council of State, and Inouye Y., the Minister of the Interior*, but I have not yet found such names with the given titles.
[442] Jenő Cholnoky (1870–1950) was a prominent Hungarian geographer and professor. He specialized in physical geography, geomorphology, and climatology, and made significant contributions to the study of Hungary's landscapes and environmental features. Cholnoky was active in geographic education and publishing, and he served as a key figure at the Hungarian Institute of Geography.
[443] Budapesti Hírlap, 1900-10-24 / 292. szám
[444] Budapesti Hírlap, 1900.11.29. 328. szám Translated by the Author.

Around **December** 16, a surgeon from the University of Tokyo paid a visit to the University of Budapest to observe the major clinics in the capital. He focused particularly on studying the equipment in the surgical clinics.[445]

Between **December** 18 and 20, Naohiko Masaki (正木直彦 1862–1940), government councilor and chief inspector of education, and Professor Senzaburō Tachibana (立花銑三郎 1867–1901) made a trip to Budapest with two other Japanese companions during their study tour of Europe.[446] They were guided by Mihály Járbut, royal inspector of education, and Géza Farkas, ministerial clerk at the Ministry of Culture. They visited the University of Science, the University of Technology, and numerous schools and kindergartens. At the teacher training college, the youth choir sang *Szózat* and *Fóti dal*,[447] while students from the József Ferenc Institute entertained them with cimbalom music and a *csárdás* dance performance. The Japanese delegation received a handwritten report on the administration of Hungarian public education, as well as poems by *Petőfi* and several other Hungarian poets.[448] They paid a visit to the *Felsőerdősori* Elementary School in District VI, where they were welcomed by Royal Inspector Mihály Józsa and School Director István Szőke. They viewed the school's well-equipped storeroom and also inspected the baths, dining room, and kitchen of the institution. After thoroughly examining the facilities, they signed their names in the institution's guest book.[449]

1901

In this year, Tomio Kitahara (北原十三男 1881–1964) studied beauty care in Budapest. After returning to Japan, he founded a company producing beauty care products, which still exists today.[450]

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[445] Pesti Napló, 1900.12.16. 345. szám. The article mentions a certain "*dr. Kacsura" (Dr. Katsura)*.
[446] Pesti Napló, 1900-12-19 / 348.; the article mentions *R. Okada, Director of the Teacher Training Division, and R. Fukuhara, Ministerial Advisor and Public Education Division Advisor*
[447] *Szózat ('Appeal')* is an 1836 patriotic poem by Mihály Vörösmarty, set to music by Egressy Béni in 1843; it is regarded as Hungary's second national anthem. *Fóti dal ('Song of Fót')* is an 1842 poem by Vörösmarty, often sung in choral settings and associated with Hungarian wine-drinking and patriotic traditions. Listen to the song via this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqZh9sU1e2s (accessed: 2025 Sept.)
[448] Budapesti Hirlap, 1900.12.20. 349. szám
[449] Pesti Napló, 1900-12-19 / 348. sz.
[450] Thanks to Titanilla Mátrai for finding this. Unfortunately, the details of Kitahara's trip are not yet known. The information was published on the company's website: kitahara-bigan.co.jp/about/history (accessed: 2017 Oct.)

In the same year, a group of Japanese geisha who had previously participated in the Paris World Exhibition made a trip to Budapest, where they held a week-long tour.

This year, the *Akimodos Royal Yeddo* Japanese acrobatic troupe toured Hungary and performed on the variety stage in *Ős-Budavára*[451].

Perhaps in the same year (but possibly in 1902), Keitarō Tsuno (津野慶太郎 ?–?) inspected the Mezőhegyes stud farm.[452]

In **January**, two Japanese travelers made a visit to the university in Budapest.[453]

At the end of **March**, a certain *Baron Kanda (?–?)*, a Japanese scholar, went to Budapest and spent some time in the *Keleti Kereskedelmi Akadémia (Oriental Academy of Commerce)*, where he was received by Director Ignác Kunos.[454] He attended several lectures in French, English, and Turkish, and requested a copy of the Academy's organizational regulations for study purposes.[455]

On **August** 7–8, the secretary of Kanagawa Prefecture (a certain *S. Sugiyama*) and Watarō Watanabe (渡辺和太郎 1878–1922), an official from Yokohama, traveled to Budapest to study the capital. On the 8th, they met with the mayor.

Around **September** 18, the poet Matsutarō Tanaka (田中松太郎 1863–1949) arrived in Budapest, accompanied by a Japanese journalist and two embassy secretaries. Based on a contemporary article, they had come to Europe two months earlier to study Western culture. Guided by the secretaries, they visited the Parliament, the university, the clinic, and the *National Foundling Home (Országos Lelencház)*. They were particularly interested in the statue of Kossuth. After spending a few days in Budapest, they traveled on to Belgium. The article also notes that the Japanese journalist would send a report on their experiences to a newspaper in Yokohama.[456]

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[451] *Ős-Budavára (Ancient Buda Castle)* was an entertainment quarter built in Budapest's City Park for the 1896 Millennial Exhibition. Designed as a mock-historic town with oriental and medieval motifs, it featured restaurants, cafés, dance halls, and popular attractions. It closed in 1907 and was demolished in 1910.

[452] 央獣医会雑誌15(8)中央獣医会, 1902.08.匈牙利王國「メソヘキス」牧場參觀之記 / 津野慶太郎 / pp. 12-25.

[453] Debreceni Újság 1901. jan. the article mentions "*Count Nigashava Minister* and *his secretary, Vatanabe"*

[454] Ignác Kúnos (1860–1945) was a Hungarian linguist and folklorist, specializing in Turkish language and folk literature. He taught at Budapest University and directed the *Keleti Kereskedelmi Akadémia (Oriental Academy of Commerce)*, and he collected and published numerous Turkish folk tales and songs.

[455] Magyarország, 1901-03-24 / 72. szám

[456] Budapesti Hirlap, 1901.09.18. 257. szám; the article mentions Japanese journalist "*Inonje Massagiji"* and "*Hideze Ishida"*, secretary of the Japanese embassy in Vienna (the latter is not a single person, but presumably *Heijiro Hida* and *Sakuya Yoshida* 吉田作弥).

In early **October**, the secretary of the Japanese Imperial Statistical Office, referred to in contemporary articles as *S. Itō (?–?)*, undertook a journey to Budapest as a delegate to the International Statistical Congress. When the participants of the conference went on a field trip to Herkulesfürdő (now Băile Herculane, Romania), it was reported in the press that Itō delivered a speech in Japanese, which was interpreted into French. The Japanese scholar remarked that, having traveled throughout Europe and now arrived in Hungary, he felt as though he were at home. If we can believe the article, he emphasized that the Kingdom of Hungary was like Japan to him: the mountains and valleys resembled those of Japan, and the people were "*just as ambitious and eager to learn as they are in Japan*". He said that he would "*tell his compatriots to love and respect the Hungarians*", and then proclaimed: "*Long live young Hungary!*".[457]

Between **October** 17 and 19, Junnosuke Yasui (安井淳之助 1865-?), director of the Japanese National Stud Farm, and two other Japanese officials came to Budapest during their tour of Europe. According to contemporary articles, they studied the national stud farms.[458]

At the end of **November**, Lajos Lóczy[459] guided geologist Naomasa Yamasaki (山崎直方 1870-1929), a geography professor at Tokyo University, through the *Kogutovitz és Társa Földrajzi Intézet (Kogutovitz and Company Geographical Institute)*.[460]

Between **November** 17 and 20, politician Kunitake Watanabe (渡辺国武 1846–1919), banker Sanshirō Shiokawa (塩川三四郎 1873–1965), and a third Japanese national undertook a journey to Budapest and met with Prime Minister Kálmán Széll. As stated in an article, the Hungarian prime minister was very pleased to see the Japanese gentlemen, spoke with them at length, and ensured that when they toured the sights of the capital, they were accompanied by a guide with sufficient language skills (the same

[457] Magyar Polgár, 1901-10-08 / 229. Sz. Translated by the Author.
[458] Pesti Hirlap, 1901.10.18. 288. szám; the article also mentions "*Dr. Kippei, a university professor"*, and "*B. Hirosaura, a government advisor from Tokyo"*, but their identities have not yet been determined. There is a Japanese source related to the trip, in which Yasui briefly describes Hungarian stud farms, where they are located, and what breeds of horses are bred there. See: 安井淳之助 歐米視察談 1902 年 15 巻 6 号 p. 15.
[459] Lajos Lóczy (1849–1920) was a Hungarian geologist and geographer. He participated in Béla Széchenyi's 1877–1880 expedition to China and India, contributing to geological surveys. Later, he served as a professor at the University of Budapest and directed the Hungarian Geological Institute from 1908 to 1919. His work significantly advanced the understanding of Hungary's natural landscapes.
[460] Budapesti Hírlap, 1901. november 20.

guide who had previously assisted the Persian shah in Budapest, although the article does not mention the guide's name).[461]

1902

From **January**, Kurakichi Shiratori (白鳥庫吉 1865–1943), a renowned Japanese orientalist, lecturer at Tokyo Imperial University, and later history teacher to Emperor Hirohito, spent seven months at the University of Budapest and the *Keleti Kereskedelmi Akadémia (Oriental Academy of Commerce)* studying Turkology. He was one of the few who learned some Hungarian.[462] During his stay, he traveled through Budapest, Debrecen, Szeged, Nyíregyháza, and Fiume, and after returning, he published a short article entitled '*An Overview of Hungarian History*' in 1905. In the spring of 1902, the *Debreceni Újság* newspaper reported on Shiratori's visit to Debrecen in several articles. Reports reveal that he began his tour of Hungary after a three-month stay in Budapest to study the language. He stayed in Debrecen on the second day of Pentecost. The hospitality was organized by the most distinguished teachers of the local secondary schools. He visited the Pentecost fair, almost all of the secondary schools, and the library. At the gala dinner, he gave a toast in Hungarian, to which one of the Hungarian professors responded in Japanese.

On **January** 28–29, three Japanese officials from Formosa paid a visit to the Royal Criminal Court to gain experience in criminal justice. They were received by President Leó Zsitvay and Dr. Béla Nagy, court clerk. They toured the criminal court and then paid a visit to the royal prosecutor's office, where they were received by Deputy Chief Prosecutor Gusztáv Greguss and Royal Prosecutor Gyula Pataky. They inspected the prison and the detention center, and then returned to Vienna on the 29th.[463]

In **February**, a Japanese theater company led by Sadayakko (川上貞奴 1871–1946) – Japan's first 'international superstar' – and her husband, Kawakami

[461] Magyar Földművelő 1901. nov. 17. 46. szám 364. o.; the article mentions the following names and titles: *Vicomte K. Watanabe, "the powerful and, in any case, extremely interesting former finance minister of the Japanese Empire"*; S*anshiro Shiokawa and his French interpreter, J. Watanabe, "who is also a legal expert."*

[462] Senga Toru: *Shiratori Kurakichi és a magyar nyelvészek századunk elején*, Magyar Nyelv, 91. évf., 2. szám, 1995. p. 165.; See also: Chapter Five

[463] Pesti Hirlap, 1902.01.28. 27. szám. The names and addresses on the guests' business cards were as follows, according to the article: "*Munekoto Suzuki President of the Supreme Court Formosa, Japan"; "Zeko Nakamura Geheimer Regierungsrath im Gouvernement zu Formosa Japan"; "Kozo Mori Professor an der Polizei und Gefangniss-Schule und standiger Hilfsarbeiter im Gouvernement zu Formosa Japan"*.

Otojirō (川上音二郎 1864–1911), gave a week-long series of performances at the *Uránia Theater*[464] in Budapest.

In **March**, Hidezane/Hidemi Matsunami (松波秀實 1865-1922), forestry advisor to the Japanese Imperial Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, and a teacher from Tokyo travelled to Budapest. Macunami studied the history and organization of forestry in Hungary, as well as the central and external service systems and their scope of responsibilities.[465]

Around **May** 16, Nobuaki Makino (牧野伸顕 1861–1949), Japan's ambassador to Vienna, was in Budapest to attend court ceremonies and to pay an extended visit to the *Keleti Kereskedelmi Akadémia (Oriental Academy of Commerce)*, where he was received by Director Ignác Kúnos. He presumably met with Kurakichi Shiratori (白鳥庫吉 1865–1942), a Japanese student at the Academy.[466]

Between **July** 19 and 21, former Prime Minister Count Masayoshi Matsukata (松方正義 1835–1924) spent two days in Budapest. He was accompanied by Heinrich von Siebold and Nobuaki Makino (牧野伸顕) on his journey from the embassy in Vienna. He visited the *bridge at Eskü Square*[467], the National Museum, the Parliament Building, the Prime Minister's Palace (where he only left his card, as the Hungarian prime minister was absent), the Industrial Hall in City Park, and the exhibition at the Museum of Commerce. He was received by Gyula Kovács, commercial advisor; Ignác Brüll, British consul; Ödön Hegedűs, chief inspector; and Ármin Sasvári. On the evening of the 20th, Ignác Brüll hosted a gala dinner in his honor at the *Gerbeaud Pavilion*[468]. The count expressed regret that he was unable to meet the Hungarian prime minister and continued on to Vienna on the 21st.[469]

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[464] The Uránia Theater, opened in 1899 in Budapest, was originally a scientific lecture hall and cinema, later becoming a venue for theatrical and cultural performances.
[465] According to the source, the forestry advisor's companion and interpreter was a certain "*Dr. Shitaro Kawai*" an "*ordinary professor at Tokyo University*". See: Schmidt Károly, m. kir. erdőmester: *Japán erdészeti viszonyairól*, 1902., Erdészeti Lapok, 41. évf. 4. füzet
[466] Pesti Hírlap, 1902-05-16 / 133. szám
[467] The Erzsébet Bridge (originally called the *Eskü Square Bridge, Eskü téri híd*) connected Pest and Buda at Eskü Square (now Március 15. tér). Under construction in 1902 and opened in 1903, it was celebrated as one of the world's longest chain bridges of its time.
[468] The Gerbeaud Pavilion was part of Budapest's famous Gerbeaud Confectionery, established by Emil Gerbeaud. By the early 1900s, it included elegant halls used for gala dinners, receptions, and high-society events.
[469] Budapesti Napló, 1902-07-20.

Around **August** 19, Japanese government officials led by Koreshige Nio (仁尾惟茂 1853–1932), chief of the Tobacco Special Trade Bureau made a trip to Budapest to study tobacco and salt excise duties. They traveled to Debrecen, where they observed Hungarian tobacco processing, and went to *Pallag Puszta*[470] to examine the tobacco production experimental station. At that time, Hungarian tobacco production was 600,000 metric tons per year, compared with Japan's 5 million metric tons per year, placing Hungary first among tobacco-producing countries in Europe, according to the article.[471]

Around **September** 28, Japanese scientist Kandō Yamada (山田菅道 ?-?), who studied internal medicine in Berlin, arrived in Hungary for a week-long visit at the invitation of Lajos Ágner[472]. He had met Ágner while still in Berlin. They toured the castle, Margaret Island, the Fisherman's Bastion, Gellért Hill, the Parliament, Andrássy Avenue, Kossuth Lajos Street, and the clinic, whose facilities Yamada praised. From Budapest, he took a two-day trip to Nagyszécsény to visit the Ruszinkó family, close friends of Ágner, "*where he tried his hand at the csárdás on two cheerful evenings*". Afterwards, he traveled from Budapest to Karlsbad for an international medical congress.[473]

[470] The Pallag Puszta Tobacco Experimental Station, founded in 1897, was Hungary's first independent tobacco research institute. Located in Debrecen, it focused on agricultural and curing experiments, tobacco breeding, and organized tobacco seed production. Its research significantly contributed to the development and improvement of tobacco cultivation methods in Hungary.
[471] Pesti Hirlap, 1902.08.19. 227. szám. The article mentions a certain "*Boumaki, financial architectural advisor*". An article in the Debreceni Újság dated August 17, 1902, mentions additional names: "*Isugio Mumatsume, the director's attaché"*; and "*Jungiro Ishii, chief inspector of a tobacco factory"*.
[472] Lajos Ágner (1878–1949) was a Hungarian literary historian, Orientalist, and educator. He studied Japanese and Chinese in Berlin, taught at several Hungarian schools, and published works on East Asian literature and pedagogy under multiple pen names.
[473] Ország-Világ, 1902-09-28 / 39. szám p. 785.

Photo taken during Kandō Yamada's visit in 1902

The *Fukushimas* acrobatic troupe performed at the Fővárosi Orpheum[474] in early **October**.[475]

Around **October** 11, a forest councilor and a forest master arrived on Máramaros Island to gather experience on the local forest administration. They were guided by Miklós Tomassek, a forester from Budapest. Accompanying them were chief forester György Czékus and Zoltán Bíró. They inspected the water catchment at Makerló, the tree nurseries, river regulation works, the wood wool factory in Raho village, the Hoverla dam, the seed extraction plant in Tiszabogdány, and the Treasury Steam Sawmill in Sziget-Kamara.[476]

[474] The *Fővárosi Orfeum* in Budapest was a prominent entertainment venue in the early 1900s, known for variety shows, operettas, and lavish performances that attracted both local and international audiences.
[475] Budapesti Hirlap, 1902-10-07 / 275. sz.
[476] Budapesti Hírlap, 1902-10-18 / 286. szám; The article mentions *Dr. M. Ajac, Imperial Forestry Advisor*, and *H. Mochizuki, Imperial Forestry Master*, but their exact identities remain unclear for the time being.

1903

Sometime between 1903 and 1906, a renowned historian, Hayashi Kiroku (林毅陸 1872-1950), visited Austria and Hungary while he was in Paris on a scholarship, where he was researching European diplomatic history.[477]

On the evening of **September** 9, Suzuki Umetarō (1874-1943), a professor at Tokyo University (who was instrumental in the discovery of vitamin B1), arrived in Debrecen. He was on a three-year study trip to Europe to research economic conditions and, specifically, to examine tobacco cultivation at the Debrecen Economic Institute. While in Debrecen, he stayed with the landowner Vince Jósa before continuing on to Kassa on the 11th and then to Arad.[478]

1904

On **January** 8, two Japanese majors arrived in Vienna with the aim of traveling to the western counties of Hungary to purchase horses suitable for artillery and cavalry service, although it is not yet known whether this visit took place or not.[479]

Also in **January**, two Japanese geologists came to Hungary for three weeks to observe the *Földtani Intézet (Geological Institute)* in Budapest and the *Selmeczbányai Bányászati és Erdészeti Akadémia (Mining and Forestry Academy in Selmeczbánya)*[480]. The Hungarian press reported in detail on the guests, Kinosuke Inoue (井上禧之助 1873-1947) and Michio Yae (八重道雄 ?-?):

> "*The younger one: Dr. Inoue Kinosuke, 28 years old, a quiet, serious man, highly educated in his field, fluent in German, speaks broken English. He says he is of Chinese origin and probably comes from a distinguished family. This is evident from his slender build, narrow face, high forehead, and slightly slanted eyes. The older one: Michio Yae, 36 years old, a more lively and talkative man than his*

[477] Research by Takanobu Koshitori: *Princess Atsu and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra* Source: homepage3.nifty.com/kosi/wien/up80/up80.html (Accessed: 2013 May, link no longer available)

[478] 近藤滋郎『ここは遠きのほとり – ハンガリーに行った日本人』In: *Barátság – A Japán-Magyar Baráti Társaság folyóirata*, 124. szám p. 12.

[479] Magyar Polgár, 1904-01-18 / 13. szám. The article featured Japanese "*artillery major Saguri* and *cavalry major Muhichi"*.

[480] The Selmeczbányai Bányászati és Erdészeti Akadémia (Mining and Forestry Academy), located in the historic mining town of Selmeczbánya (now: Banská Štiavnica, Slovakia), was the world's first technical university dedicated to higher education in mining, metallurgy, and forestry. This made it a crucial center for science and a groundbreaking institution in the Kingdom of Hungary.

colleague, with a greater knowledge of languages. His temperamental nature often put him in awkward situations in our company, but he took it all in good humor, while his younger companion maintained his distinguished seriousness. Yae says he is of Ainu origin and comes from the island of Yezo. He is also a poet, and when in company, inspired by good wine, he not only recited but also sang his poems. Sometimes his poems soared to great heights, and his companion also rose to the occasion, and talking and singing to each other, they finally ended the ode with a loud shout. At such times, their eyes straightened, while, as we know, the eyes of a drunk person are crossed. When toasting, they shout "banzai", which means "live ten thousand years"! When I also said "banzai" and clinked glasses, my colleague Yae politely replied, "Live forever!" (...) In Selmeczbánya, Dr. Hugó Böckh, mining advisor and geology professor, did everything in his power to ensure that they left the ancient mining town with pleasant memories, and the academy's teaching staff even organized a banquet in their honor. In Budapest, the main destination of their studies was the museum of the Geological Institute on Stefánia Road, but they also visited the National Museum and the university institutes. University professor Lajos Lóczy and assistant professor Dr. Jenő Cholnoky, two outstanding experts on East Asia, gave the Japanese a very warm welcome in Budapest, and mining advisor Tamás Szontágh hosted a dinner in their honor, which was also attended by the director of the Geological Institute and several Hungarian geologists."[481]

The two geologists explored the hot springs in Buda under the guidance of mining advisor Tamás Szontágh and geologist Aurél Liffa. They also gave the Hungarian traveller Benedek Balogh Barátosi a letter of reference to take to Tokyo, thereby helping him with his journey.[482]

[481] Dr. Papp Károly: *Két japán geológus Budapesten*. 1904. február. Source: *Huszadik század internetes archívuma*. http://www.huszadikszazad.hu/index.php?apps=cikk&cikk=2681 (Accessed: 2008 Aug.) Translated by the Author. ; In the January 17, 1904 issue of the magazine *Jövendő (The Future)*, we find an interview with the two Japanese in an article titled *Beszélgetés két japánival,* in which they discuss the impending Russo-Japanese War.
[482] Budapesti Hírlap, 1904. január 21.

Group photo with Kinosuke Inoue, Michio Yae, and geologists from the Geological Institute. 1904, Stefánia Palota (Stefania Palace)

In **February**, Kametarō Iijima (飯島亀太郎 ?-?), Japanese consul in Odessa, visited Budapest and met with Ármin Vámbéry, a prominent Hungarian Orientalist.

Around **February** 28, a certain *Dr. Niimoto*, a Japanese director from Formosa, went to Budapest. He paid a visit to the editorial office of Pesti Napló, where he met with journalists and signed his name in the editorial office's guest book.[483]

Around **May**, Japanese architect Chūta Itō (伊東忠太 1867–1954) came to Budapest while on a study trip to Europe. His handwritten notebook, which has survived to this day, contains sketches of Budapest that reveal his keen interest in the columns of the Basilica and the National Museum.[484]

On or about **August** 22, Takahira Tsuji (辻高衡 1869–1928), a lecturer in Japanese language and literature at the Oriental Seminar of Berlin University (Seminar

[483] Pesti Napló, 1904.03.02. 62. szám
[484] The manuscript can be viewed on the website of the Japan Architectural Museum's digital archive. 伊東忠太資料、野帳、第九巻、土耳古, pp. 46-56.; news-sv.aij.or.jp/da2/yachou/Gallery_3_chuta2-9k.htm (Accessed: 2013 May)

für Orientalische Sprachen), made a trip to Budapest at the invitation of his former Hungarian student, Lajos Ágner.[485]

From **October** 10, Japanese politician Kogorō Kanokogi (鹿子木小五郎 1867–1922) spent a few days in Budapest and left behind a short note about his visit.[486] Kanokogi traveled to Europe and the Austro-Hungarian Empire with the support of the Japanese government. He refers to Hungary as *Ungarn* in his few-paragraph note, in which we find the following: he liked the picturesque beauty of Budapest better than Vienna, but it was the conflicts between nationalities and the efforts to Magyarize that caught his attention much more.

> "*In Austria and Hungary, we find deeply rooted ethnic strife between the peoples, and Hungary is in the process of Magyarizing all ethnic groups (...) While in Budapest the Magyarization of Germans, Serbs, and others seems to be successful, in the countryside it has not yielded any appreciable results.*" [487]

In a few lines, he touches on the Hun-Hungarian kinship theory ("*the Hungarians are descendants of the Huns*") and discusses the similarities between the Hungarian and Japanese languages (he mentions the similarity in the order of family names and first names, and claims that "*the Hungarian language belongs to the same family as Japanese, Korean, Manchu, Turkish languages,*" where "*the noun is followed by the verb*").

1905

On **May** 27-28, Kajinosuke Ibuka (井深梶之助 1854–1940) and Yōitsu Honda (本多庸一 1849–1912), professors at a Protestant theological college, traveled to Budapest, where they gave lectures. They were representatives of Japanese Christian youth associations attending a jubilee congress in Paris, where they met with representatives of Hungarian youth associations. On the 27th, at a soirée organized by the Reformed Youth Association of Budapest in the grand hall of the National Museum, they gave lectures

[485] Budapesti Hírlap, 1904-08-22 / 231. szám
[486] Research by Takanobu Koshitori: *Princess Atsu and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra* Source: homepage3.nifty.com/kosi/wien/up84/up84.html (Accessed: 2013. May; link no longer available)
[487] 鹿子木小五郎『観風雑記』Source: kanokogi.asablo.jp/blog/2006/10/03/546435, and kanokogi.asablo.jp/blog/2006/10/04/547638 (Accessed: 2013. May; link no longer available) Translated by the Author.

on the situation of Christianity in Japan and the impact of the struggle with the Russians on the spread of Christianity. Ibuka asked those present to include the struggling Japanese people in their prayers and to ask the Lord to help them not only in their earthly struggle, but also in their fight against paganism, and to bring them to the light of the gospel. They visited the Reformed Church on Hold Street to attend the service on the 28th and for Ibuka to deliver a sermon in English. During their visit, they were welcomed by Gyula Forgács, assistant pastor of Kőbánya, Aladár Szabó, professor of theology, Elek Petri, pastor, and Aladár Szilassy, president of the Reformed Youth Association of Budapest.[488]

In **June**, a Japanese scholar Kanesaburō Andō (安藤兼三郎 1874-1931) sojourned in Hungary. The contemporary press merely mentions that he wrote about Vilmos Prőhle (a Hungarian Orientalist and linguist known for his work in Turkic languages and his interest in Japan) in the Japanese newspaper *Romaji* and allegedly spent time in Budapest at some point and met Prőhle.[489]

In **August**, a senior foreign affairs official named *Moriya* reportedly vacationed in Siófok, a popular resort town on Lake Balaton, on medical advice.[490]

In **August**, Benji Hirosawa (広沢弁二 1862–1928), a Japanese rancher, agricultural and commercial bureaucrat, politician, and representative of the Imperial Ministry of Trade and Agriculture, arrived in Debrecen as part of his tour of Europe.[491]

Between **August** 10 and 17, historian Kiyotarō/Seitarō Saitō (斎藤清太郎 1872–1941) was in Budapest, where he paid a visit to the editorial office of the Pesti Hírlap newspaper. He left Japan around 1903, well before the outbreak of war, and also travelled through London, Paris, and Berlin. He was guided on his journey by Lajos Ágner.[492]

On or about **September** 7, lawyer Shigejirō Ogawa (小河滋次郎 1864–1925) attended the Prison Congress in Budapest. He inspected the prison on Alkotmány Street, where he was welcomed by royal prosecutor István Magyar and prison warden

[488] Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap 1905.06.04. 23. szám
[489] Pesti Napló, 1906-11-14. A postcard sent from Budapest by him dated on 21/05/1905 can be found here: 山形大学附属博物館
[490] Debreceni Független Újság, 1905.08.19.; the name in the article was written as "*Morija Gemjiss*"
[491] Debreceni Független Újság, 1905.08.30.
[492] Pesti Hírlap, 1905-08-10 / 220. szám

László Kisfaludy. He was impressed by the modern facilities of the prison and spent about two hours touring the cells and infirmary, inspecting the kitchen and library, and taking detailed notes on everything he saw.[493]

1906

In mid-**January**, an odd piece of news appeared in the Hungarian press: a report claimed that a Japanese nurse had been admitted to the hospital in Temesvár (now: Timișoara, Romania) who had arrived from the Manchurian battlefield together with a Russian nurse and who had allegedly escaped from Russian captivity. She had met the Russian nurse on the way, and they had traveled to Galacz on a British ship and from there to Orsova on a Hungarian ship. The two women were transferred to the hospital in Temesvár by the Orsova magistrate's court.[494]

Presumably sometime between **January** and **July**, Kanehiro Takaki (高木兼寛 1849–1920), a physician, went to Hungary as part of his European tour to visit his son, who was studying at the University of Vienna, and gave several lectures at major universities during his trip. It is unfortunate that the details of his trip are not yet known, as during his European tour he was interested in how European public opinion viewed Japan, the victor in the Russo-Japanese War.[495]

Around **March** 25–26, economist Masao Kanbe (神戸正雄 1877–1959) spent a few days in Szeged. From Szeged, he went to Kamarás to see the Hungarian village, the winery, and the grape production. On the 25th, he was in Újszeged, where he visited the public garden and the tree nursery. At the gala dinner held in his honor, he concluded his speech with the words: "*Long live Kossuth, long live Hungary!*".[496]

In **April**, at the invitation of Miklós Szemere, a Hungarian politician, a Japanese judo coach, Kichisaburō Sasaki (佐々木吉三郎 1872–1924), arrived in Hungary. Immediately after his arrival, he threw himself into his work, giving judo lessons at the

[493] Budapesti Hirlap, 1905.09.07. 247. szám
[494] Az Ujság, 1906-01-12 / 11. szám. Even if the news is true (which is highly unlikely), it would be almost impossible to decipher the Japanese (or, rather, Polynesian or Pacific Islander?) name from the misspelled transcription that appears in the article as "*Tipp-Yamira-Tu-La*".
[495] Research by Takanobu Koshitori: *Princess Atsu and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra* Source: homepage3.nifty.com/kosi/wien/up95/up95.html (Accessed: 2013 May; link no longer available)
[496] Pesti Napló, 1906-03-26 / 84. Szám. Translated by the Author.

University of Budapest, the police academy, and other places. He even compiled a book on judo in 1907, which was published in Hungarian. Szemere was famous for his *eccentricities*; even Gyula Krúdy, a famous Hungarian writer and journalist, mentioned his "*Japanese sports mania*" in one of his works:

> "*Miklós Szemere, who carried two worlds within him, the conservative Hungarian past and modern progress, even in the field of sports, secretly brought a wrestling master from Japan, with whom he locked himself in his reception room for hours on end. The Japanese was a quiet, insignificant little chap with a peculiar face and a shy appearance, as if he had been a minor priest in his homeland. However, word soon spread about his jiu-jitsu techniques, which were initially said to be a secret invented in Buddhist monasteries, because this wrestling method allowed even the strongest man to be pinned down with a single handhold. Mr. Szemere, a notable figure in Hungarian sports, likes to surround himself with mystery, keeping his Japanese in a locked room.*"[497]

The history of judo in Hungary began during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), a period when world public opinion was focused on Japan. (Judo became the first Japanese martial art to attract international interest and become an Olympic sport.) As stated in the first judo textbook published in Hungary in 1907:

> "*(...) we began to investigate what could be the cause of the Japanese people's formidable strength, amazing skill, and tenacity, and where their discipline, calmness, mental strength, and many other virtues sprouted from. And in our research, we discovered that the source of Japanese strength is jiu-jitsu and its perfected form, judo. (...) we could certainly use a little judo to reshape our nervous nature a bit, which flies into a rage at the slightest buzz of a fly! The judo master teaches his students patience, order, and discipline; he teaches them to respect their opponents, to think chivalrously, and instills fearless courage in them, making judo the best pedagogical tool for character building in young people. (...)*" [498]

Miklós Szemere's motives for introducing and applying judo were discussed in the book:

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[497] Krúdy Gyula: *Bothmer kapitány, aki a sorssal és medvékkel birkózott*. 1926. Translated by the Author.

[498] Sasaki Kichisaburo, Speidl Zoltán: *Djudo, a japán dzsiudzsicu tökéletesített módszere*. Budapest, 1907. Hornyánszky nyomda. Speidl's foreword, pp. VIII.-XV. Translated by the Author.

"*This noble man was the first to recognize the benefits of judo for the Hungarian race while working tirelessly for the harmonious physical and mental education of Hungarian youth, and with the skill he used to bring his ideas to life, sparing no expense, invited a distinguished judo master to our country.*"[499]

Sasaki, who was a student of Jigorō Kanō, the founder of judo, was selected as follows: in January 1906, Miklós Szemere contacted the Japanese minister in Vienna, asking him to recommend a judo master. To fulfill the request, the minister wrote a letter to Jigorō Kanō, in which, according to the interpretation in the book by Zoltán Speidl and Sasaki, he allegedly wrote the following:

"*Hungary, especially in recent years, has felt warm sympathy toward the Japanese Empire. This is vividly demonstrated by the fact that His Excellency Miklós Szemere, whose every endeavor is directed toward the national revival of Hungary, upon learning that the Japanese nation's strength has been greatly enhanced by judo, wishes to invite a teacher of this art at his own expense. (...) Of the conditions set by Miklós Szemere regarding the teacher, I would like to highlight the following: a) The teacher to be appointed must be a gentleman in the strictest sense of the word. This is of great importance. b) As the teacher in question will have to move into so-called high society, he must speak several European languages. c) The course will last four months and the teacher must begin teaching at the end of March, but no later than the beginning of April.*"[500]

Sasaki arrived in Hungary equipped with Japanese straw mats (tatami), training uniforms, and other necessary equipment. He began teaching at the *Budapesti Egyetemi Atlétikai Club's (Budapest University Athletic Club)* sports facility in Lágymányos. A year after his departure, the aforementioned book on judo, co-authored by Zoltán Speidl and entitled *Djudo: The Perfected Method of Japanese Jujitsu*, was published. This book was intended to carry on Sasaki's teachings after his return home:

"*The purpose of my little book is, on the one hand, to supplement my unfortunately brief teaching period and, on the other hand, to enable Hungarians,*

[499] Sasaki Kichisaburo, Speidl Zoltán: *Djudo, a japán dzsiudzsicu tökéletesített módszere*. Budapest, 1907. Hornyánszky nyomda. Speidl's foreword, pp. XV. Translated by the Author.
[500] Sasaki Kichisaburo, Speidl Zoltán: *Djudo, a japán dzsiudzsicu tökéletesített módszere*. Budapest, 1907. Hornyánszky nyomda. Speidl's foreword, p. XIX. Translated by the Author.

as the European pioneers of serious professional judo schools, to lay the foundations of this art in other countries as well".

Sasaki – or rather Speidl, who conveyed his words – concludes with the following:

"*Sons of beautiful Hungary, who would doubt that you will always strive to develop your national character and carry the cause of national revival in your hearts? It would give me great pleasure if the youth of the University of Budapest and those gentlemen who have learned the art of judo from me would further develop their skills in this field on the basis of this book, if they would apply judo as a method of education, and especially if they would travel to Japan for the purpose of such studies*".[501]

Zoltán Speidl himself closes the foreword to the book as follows:

"*I can say with certainty that it would be beneficial for the Hungarian nation if judo, this interesting and exotic offshoot of Japanese culture, were to take root under the Hungarian sky!*".[502]

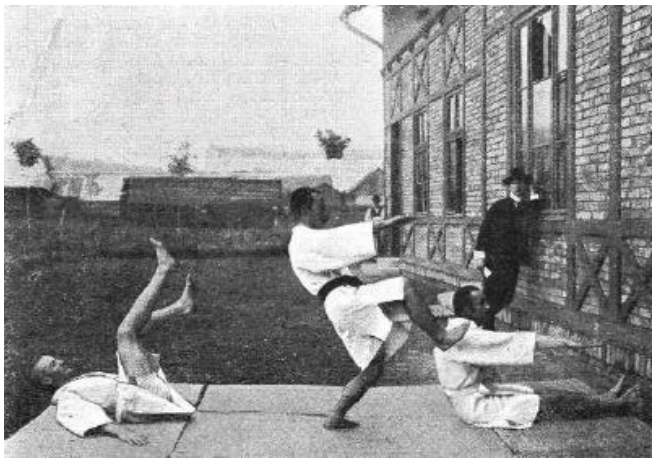
Sasaki's four-month course had no official continuation, and thus Miklós Szemere's initiative came to an end. There were 450 applicants for the course, of whom 60 were selected to begin and only six completed it. Although Sasaki was only in Hungary for a few months, his name and activities did not disappear into the dustbin of history. His personality continued to be remembered as late as 1933 – although in a different, less positive way:

"*The Japanese jiu-jitsu champion was terribly conceited and had a Spanish wax mentality. Szemere did not like this superiority. So he sought out Béla Varga and said to him: 'Son, fight this Japanese man!' Béla Varga willingly placed himself at the High Lord's disposal. The Japanese looked at his opponent with terrible contempt. And he said to him through an interpreter with paternal benevolence: 'Well, my son, you can come at me however you want, you can gouge my eyes out if you can, you can stomp on my stomach if you have time – my honorable raisin flower, my pitiful Hungarian champion, you are about to engage in a duel*

[501] Sasaki Kichisaburo, Speidl Zoltán: *Djudo, a japán dzsiudzsicu tökéletesített módszere*. Budapest, 1907. Hornyánszky nyomda. Speidl's foreword, p. XXIII. Translated by the Author.
[502] Sasaki Kichisaburo, Speidl Zoltán: *Djudo, a japán dzsiudzsicu tökéletesített módszere*. Budapest, 1907. Hornyánszky nyomda. Speidl's foreword, p. XVII. Translated by the Author

with the son of the rising sun!' Béla Varga did not hesitate for long. He attacked the son of the rising sun and in fifty seconds knocked his honorable brother to the ground, who almost hid under the earth in shame. Miklós Szemere had a good laugh, a proud and healthy laugh at this."[503]

Judo and Sasaki's work in Hungary were later praised by one of his former students, Dr. Emil Neidenbach, a high school teacher and principal in Budapest and a member of the National Physical Education Council, in his 1931 book *Testgyakorlás és tudomány (Physical Exercise and Science)*. Sasaki's book was rediscovered by chance in 2005, when a Japanese guest at a physics conference in Hungary, Professor Shōji Nagamiya, director of the Japan Proton Accelerator Research Complex, emailed the organizers asking for help in locating a book written by his grandfather. Thanks in part to his efforts, after the centenary of Sasaki Kichisaburō's visit (2006), a commemorative judo competition was organized in 2007 in his honor, the *Sasaki Judo Cup*, where the Japanese and Hungarian national teams competed before a large audience. Later, Professor Nagamiya co-founded the *Sasaki Judo Foundation* and, together with representatives of Hungarian judo, helped establish the *Sasaki Hungarian Judo Virtual Museum*.[504]



Sasaki and his students practicing 'ukemi' or breakfalls, 1906.

[503] Nemzeti Sport, 1933. március 15. Translated by the Author.
[504] https://judo.hu/sasaki-kichisaburo-alapitvany; http://www.judomuzeum.hu/ (accessed: 2025 Sept.)

A Japanese botanist, Jinzō Matsumura (松村任三 1856–1928) came to Hungary during his European travels sometime between **May** 1906 and February 1907, but no further details about his trip are known at this time.[505]

In **May**, an article reported that a certain "*Nakamune Akira*" (?-?), a 32-year-old geography teacher from Japan, was on a study trip in Budapest, although it is difficult to determine whether the report was genuine or merely a fabricated piece of news. The reason he appeared in the newspaper was that he had apparently become involved with a Hungarian woman named Anna Bernáth, whom he pursued a bit too eagerly.[506]

> "*On Sunday afternoon, he saw a pretty girl on Andrássy Avenue. He threw himself at her and managed to get to know her. Bernáth Annuska was a private lady who welcomed the Japanese man's courtship. Nakamone Akira invited the girl to dinner. They visited various entertainment venues, ending up in the darkest part of Ferencváros. The Japanese scholar invited the girl to his apartment. They were on their way home on Lónyay Street when the Japanese lover's proposals greatly upset Annuska Bernáth. The girl simply wanted to leave the geographer, who attacked her in a fit of rage. He cursed her in every language. The woman, tired of the scandal, slapped Nakamone Akira. The Japanese man hit her back with his stick. During the fight, the Japanese man's stick knocked off the woman's gold watch, which was hanging from a gold chain, and it fell to the ground. The girl started shouting: 'Robber! Murderer! Help!' People rushed over to the commotion. The Japanese man, fearing scandal, ran away. This made the situation even more suspicious, so they gave chase and managed to catch the Japanese man. Meanwhile, in the commotion, someone stole Annuska Bernáth's watch. The Japanese man was taken to the police headquarters, where Annuska Bernáth accused him of stealing her gold watch. However, the police determined that the Japanese man was innocent and released him. The tormented geographer did not return to his apartment at 79 Váci Street until dawn. He*

[505]Research by Takanobu Koshitori: *Princess Atsu and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra* Source: homepage3.nifty.com/kosi/wien/up119/up119.html (accessed: 2013 May; link no longer available)
[506] Debreceni Független Újság, 1906.05.15.

vowed to moderate his enthusiasm for victory from then on and to no longer include the streets of the capital in his geographical research."[507]

On **August** 24–25, 1906, politician Sumitaka Haseba (長谷場純孝 1854–1914) spent some time in Budapest, staying at the Hotel Hungária. During his brief two-day visit, he toured the main sights by horse-drawn carriage, including the Parliament and Buda Castle. He noted that many people greeted him with cheers and warm handshakes, which he attributed to the heightened Hungarian interest in Japan following the Russo-Japanese War.[508]

The *15th General Conference of the Internationale Erdmessung (International Geodetic Association)* was held in Budapest between **September** 20 and 28, attended by two official delegates and one invited guest from Japan. The official delegates were Toranosuke Tasaka (田坂虎之助 1850–1919), a geodesist, and Hisashi Kimura (木村栄 1870–1943), an astronomer, while the invited guest was Shinzō Shinjō (新城新蔵 1873–1938), also an astronomer.[509] (It was at this conference that the *Eötvös pendulum*[510] and the scientific work of Loránd Eötvös was first presented to the world.)

In **October**, a delegation of three Japanese experts spent several days in Mezőhegyes with the aim of purchasing horses. The delegation was led by Kenkichi Tange (丹下謙吉 1858–1929), director of the Japanese government's horse-breeding department. Their goal was to select breeding stallions. The Japanese delegation was received and guided by Hungarian Minister of Agriculture Darányi and Dr. György Kövess, assistant secretary to the minister. In Mezőhegyes, the Japanese selected one large *Nonius*, two *North Stars*, two *Gidrans*, and one *Furioso* stallion, but they also purchased an English half-bred stallion from Antal Spilka, chief magistrate of Battonya. They paid 30,000 Krones for the five state-owned stallions and 3,000 Krones for the chief magistrate's stallion.[511]

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[507] Szabadság, 1906.05.15. Translated by the Author.
[508] 『欧米歴遊日誌』1907., pp. 118-119. o.
[509] *A Nemzetközi Földmérés 1906-os budapesti konferenciájának hatása a geodézia és geofizika fejlődésére;* Magyar Geofizika, 2006. vol. 47/3. p. 102.; Research by Takanobu Koshitori: *Princess Atsu and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra* Source: homepage3.nifty.com/kosi/wien/up64/up64.html (accessed: 2013 May; link no longer available)
[510] The Eötvös pendulum revolutionized precision gravimetry, bridging fundamental physics with very practical applications like oil exploration, and gave Hungarian science a prominent place in international geophysics.
[511] *A japán kormány lóvásárlása Mezőhegyesen* In: Battonya és Környéke, V. évf., 39. szám, 1906. október 14. p. 3.

1907

Between **March** 5 and 6, politician Nobutsune Ōkuma (大隈信常 1871–1947) journeyed to Budapest in the company of a friend. On the evening of March 5, he attended the Opera, where he saw a performance of *Monna Vanna*. On the morning of March 6, he made a visit to the House of Representatives. He spent a few more days in Budapest visiting scientific institutes and thoroughly studying the University of Technology and the medical faculty of the University of Budapest. The Japanese guest was guided by Pál Strauss, whom he had previously met in Japan.[512]

Between **July** 8 and 14, a Japanese (or perhaps a mock-Japanese?) target-shooting performer named "*Captain Yukitō Torō*" performed at the Summer Theater in Arad.

Around **October** 24–26, Takizaburō Tobari (戸張滝三郎 1866–1943), a jujitsu master of the Tokyo police, and a companion visited Budapest during their European tour. On October 26, they took part in a fencing evening at the hall of fencing master Italo Santelli.[513] One of the highlights of the evening was a kendo match between the Japanese fencing masters.[514] It was probably at this time that Miklós Szemere asked Tobari to stay in Hungary and teach jujitsu to interested students, as a result of which Tobari remained in Budapest for several months.

On **December** 7–8, Count Jutarō Komura (小村寿太郎 1855–1911), diplomat and first plenipotentiary of the Japanese-Russian peace negotiations, traveled to Budapest with the Japanese naval attaché in Berlin. They were joined by Takizaburō Tobari (戸張滝三郎 1866–1943), who was staying in Budapest. On December 8, Miklós Szemere hosted a luncheon in their honor at the National Casino, attended by Ignác Darányi, Minister of Agriculture; Count Elemér Batthyány, President of the Horse Racing Association; and Count Pál Esterházy.[515]

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[512] Pesti Hirlap, 1907.03.07. 57. szám, Tolnai Világlapja 1907.03.17. 12. szám; for some reason, Nobutsune Ōkuma appeared in the Hungarian press under the name "*Okuma Nogulénisz*".

[513] Italo Santelli (1866–1945) was a renowned Italian fencing master, often called the *father of modern sabre fencing*. He trained Hungarian fencers, many of whom became Olympic champions and world-class competitors. The fencing hall on Semmelweis Street was central to Hungary's fencing scene and attracted both local and international fencers.

[514] 1907.10.24. 252. szám. The other Japanese person is referred to as "*Otta*" in the article.

[515] Pesti Hirlap, 1907.12.10. 292. szám. The count and the attaché traveled on from Budapest to Trieste. The attaché's name in the article is "*Yashiroa*".

1908

Miklós Szemere, the '*uncrowned king of Hungarian horse racing tracks and card tables*' employed a Japanese jockey, Tōru Akaishi (赤石孔 1894–?), in Budapest in 1908. Very little is known about the jockey; even Japanese-language sources provide scant information. It is certain that after completing his second year of high school, he traveled to Europe at a very young age to compete for a jockey position. He journeyed through England, Germany, France, Austria, and the Czech lands, competing in horse races wherever he went. Akaishi arrived in Hungary sometime toward the end of the year.[516] He finally returned to Japan in 1927. He is the *not-so-positive* protagonist of a post-World War I article:

> "*Akashi Thoor suddenly appeared on the Pest turf. Szemere did not tell anyone that he had signed a Japanese jockey. (...) It was wartime, and gambling fever raged in the ring. War suppliers gambled away their easy money without a second thought, bets were paid out generously, and horse racing betting boomed. The nouveau riche eagerly sought profits. The loiterers and informers reaped the rewards. In a situation that had never happened before, strangers bet on Miklós Szemere's secretly kept, 'hidden' horses right under his nose, and he could not even get odds on his own thoroughbreds. He suspected that someone was selling the secrets of his stable, but he had no idea who the spy was who was stealing and selling the closely guarded secrets of the Szemere stable. He suspected everyone, and his detectives prowled around the staff day and night, but they did not investigate Akashi. How could he have suspected the innocent-looking, sweet-talking young Japanese man who lived alone with us in a strange city... The young Japanese man was quick to learn; after a year, he spoke Hungarian excellently, with a slight slavic accent. (...) He, Akashi Thoor, could not have been a spy. After all, he adored his master and was as grateful to him as a puppy with teary eyes. And why would he betray him, why would he try to earn money through illicit means when he had no expensive vices: he didn't*

[516] „*A fist-sized child is arriving from Japan in the next few days, having set off on his journey with his parents' consent. The new professional will receive training in Hungarian language skills in addition to his craft.*" Pesti Hírlap, 1908-12-13 / 298. szám p. 20. Translated by the Author.

drink or gamble. (…) It was wartime. The nouveau riche, who paid handsomely for any information, eagerly flooded the racecourses, and in the world of turf 'smart kids', it was already common knowledge that Akashi was 'open for business'. (...) The Japanese committed one stunt after another (...) He frequented seedy places, hung around with suspicious characters, gambled, and this brilliant horseman was lost. One afternoon, he showed up at the Sacher, Szemere's lodgings, and asked to be let in. Szemere sent him this message: 'I will buy you a ticket to Yokohama and pay for your food until you get home. You will not receive a single penny in cash.' The Japanese man turned pale upon receiving the message, turned on his heel and left. He needed money... Years later, he traveled home to Japan on Szemere's heir's money…"[517]

A contemporary article reports that Miklós Szemere had originally planned to bring six Japanese stable boys from Japan – considered particularly 'suitable' for racehorses because of their light weight – but the plan was only partially realized.[518]

As mentioned in contemporary documents, Major Dezső Nónay, head of the *Magyar Királyi Zrínyi Miklós Honvéd Gyalogsági Hadapródiskola (Hungarian Royal Miklós Zrínyi Infantry Cadet School)* in Pécs, welcomed a Japanese military attaché[519] to his school in 1908, who was invited to the institution's 'Japanese room'. The Hungarian major was keenly interested in the events of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, to the extent that he wrote about the history of the war and collected books on the subject. These books were kept in the so-called 'Japanese room'.

Although the precise details are uncertain, secondary sources refer to a 1908 tour by a Japanese trade delegation to the prominent Budapest-based firearms manufacturer, the *Arms and Machine Factory (Fegyver- és Gépgyár Rt.)*.[520]

In **January**, Takizaburō Tobari (戸張滝三郎 1866–1943), a jujitsu master of the Tokyo police force who had arrived in Budapest at the end of 1907, was still in Hungary. As mentioned in contemporary reports, at the *B.E.A.C.*, "*members can also learn*

[517] The title of the article is: *A kém (The Spy)*. The story was republished on www.paci.hu-n, an online forum for horse lovers, in 2004, but the source is not clearly indicated. http://www.paci.hu/forum/lofiversion/index.php/t708-150.html (accessed: 2008 Sept.; link no longer available)
[518] Magyarország, 1909-03-14 / 62. szám p. 12.
[519] Contemporary sources mention a certain "*Colonel Fukido Masataro, Japanese military attaché in Vienna"*.
[520] *Magyar Tudós Tárlat* – A Magyar Mezőgazdasági Múzeum és Könyvtár kiadványa. Budapest, 2018. p. 27.

Japanese jujitsu wrestling from Master Tobari of Tokyo. Tobari's teaching method differs from that of Kichisaburō, who was here two years ago, in that he places the emphasis on practical training".[521] Tobari gave several kendo demonstrations in January at Italo Santelli's Fencing Academy, as noted in several articles. One of these fencing evenings

> "*was made particularly interesting by the appearance of Japanese jujitsu master Tobari Takizaburō, who demonstrated a style of Japanese fencing previously unknown to the audience. However, the match between the Hungarian fencers and the Japanese master was not fought with conventional weapons, as Tobari wielded a weapon consisting of four thin sticks connected together, about one and a half meters long, with which he attacked and defended with remarkable skill during each match. Particularly notable were his four matches with Mészáros, Szántay, Captain Zalavszky, and finally fencing master Santelli, which were enthusiastically applauded by the audience*".[522]

Another article paints the following picture of him:

> "*His actions reveal that he is a first-rate fencer. He defends magnificently, attacks at speed, and his thrusts and cuts demonstrate great technical skill. The Japanese master will be introduced to the general public at master Stantinelli's grand fencing academy event on March 14.*"[523]

From **January**, Japanese physician Eigorō Kanasugi (金杉英五郎 1865–1942) spent three months in Budapest, where he visited the Parliament Building and met with Representative Gyula Sághy and Minister of Culture Count Albert Apponyi. After completing his scientific research in Budapest, he sent a letter dated March 20, 1908, thanking the president of the Academy and presenting a rare collection of 79 Japanese books, including an 1836 edition entitled *Famous Places and Views of Japan*.[524]

Around **February** 26, Shigema Ōba (大場茂馬 1869–1920), lawyer, politician, Japanese imperial prosecutor in Tokyo, and 'renowned criminologist', studied prisons, reformatories, and child protection institutions in Budapest. He was welcomed by

[521] Budapesti Hirlap, 1908. január 9.
[522] Magyarország, 1908. január 21. Translated by the Author.
[523] Az Újság, 1908. január 23. Translated by the Author.
[524] Akadémiai értesítő 1908, p. 234. , Budapesti Hirlap 1908.03.29.

university professor Jenő Balogh and met with Count Lipót Edelsheim Gyulai, president of the *Országos Gyermekvédő Liga (National Child Protection League)*. He then traveled from Budapest to St. Petersburg.[525]

A Japanese actress, Hanako, or Hisa Ōta (花子 / 太田ひさ, 1868–1945), performed in Budapest during **May** 1-15 with a group of three other actors.

Around **September** 29, Yonokichi Katō (加藤与之吉 1867–1933), chief engineer of Manchuria, and a university professor traveled to Budapest to inspect the capital's water supply and sewerage systems, as they were responsible for sewerage works along the Manchurian railway. They were guided by engineer Károly Darvassy.[526]

Around **October** 15, engineer Kyūsuke Myōi (名井九介 1869–1944) traveled to Hungary to inspect the canalization works on the section of the river stretching from the mouth of the Béga River to Temesvár (now: Timișoara, Romania). As head of the Japanese state water authority, Myōi studied Hungarian flood control measures. Aboard the Minister of Agriculture's boat and under the guidance of Technical Advisor Mr. Rank and engineers from the river engineering offices, he made a long journey, observing the Béga–Torok navigational structures, the Ócsa navigation locks, and the dam works. Regarding the flood protection works, he commented that "*there is no other flood protection work in Europe that is so large-scale and so precisely executed*".[527]

1909

Katsumi Kuroita (黒板勝美 1874–1946) traveled to Europe in 1908 at his own expense and arrived in Budapest in 1909, where he primarily visited museums. A more detailed discussion of his diary follows later in this chapter.

In **January**, Prince Kuniyoshi Kuninomiya (久邇宮邦彦王 1873–1929) and members of his family undertook a journey to Budapest.[528]

Politician Hara Takashi (原敬 1856–1921) made a trip to Budapest for two days, from **January** 12 to 13.[529] His diary shows that he toured the Buda castle, which he

[525] Budapesti Hírlap, 1908-02-26 / 50. szám
[526] the other Japanese person was a certain "*Sakaki R., a professor at Kyoto University"*
[527] Vízügyi Közlemények 1913. 3. évf., Pesti Napló 1908.10.15. 247. Szám. Translated by the Author.
[528] 島田昌幸『東京のフランケンシュタイン:あるオーストリア=ハンガリー外交官の東京駐在 (1911-13)』(1.) In: 学習院高等科紀要, 第4号, 2006.7., p. 63.
[529] 『原敬日記』、第2巻、福村出版 1965.

found magnificent; skated to music in the city park; made a visit to the court, the Agricultural Museum (praising its collection in particular); and the Great Market Hall. He noted that Hungarians were hostile toward Russians.[530]

From **March** 7 to 18, the *Riogoku/Ryogoku* group performed with seven members at the *Fővárosi Orpheum* and the Beketow Circus. (They returned to Budapest in 1912.)

Between **March** 12 and 14, architect Yutaka Hidaka (日高胖 1875-1952) came to Budapest during his European tour, collecting maps and postcards from the cities he visited during his travels.[531]

Between **May** 7 and 11, Prince Morimasa Nashimotonomiya (梨本宮守正 1874–1951) spent time in Budapest with his wife. Their trip is known from the diary entries of Princess Itsuko[532] (梨本宮伊都子 1882–1976), a prolific diarist who recorded her experiences almost daily for nearly eighty years, from 1899 to 1976. Although the vast body of her writings has not yet been made fully public, a Japanese researcher – granted access to the manuscripts by the heirs – was able to examine them, allowing us to shed some light on the royal couple's visit to Budapest through a few brief excerpts.[533] Princess Itsuko traveled to Europe in 1909 (Meiji 42), accompanied by a Japanese military attaché, servants, maids, doctors, and others – more than ten people in total. Prince Nashimotonomiya had just completed his studies in France, and she was sent to Europe so that they could return to Japan together, paying personal visits to the rulers of the European great powers along the way. The purpose of this visit was to enhance Japan's international prestige in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). They spent about two weeks in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, leaving

[530] homepage3.nifty.com/harakeijiten/page014.html (Accessed: 2013 June; Link no longer active.)
[531] Research by Takanobu Koshitori: *Princess Atsu and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra* Source: homepage3.nifty.com/kosi/wien/up74/up74.html (Accessed: 2013 May; Link no longer active.) In 2006, an exhibition was held at the Nakanoshima Library in Osaka, featuring a postcard from Budapest (postcard no. 34, dated March 12) and a map of Budapest (Neuster Plan von Budapest 1908) with Hidaka's pencil markings. https://www.library.pref.osaka.jp/nakato/shotenji/60_hida.html (Accessed: 2013 May; Link no longer active.)
[532] She was born in Rome in 1882 (Meiji 15). The three Japanese ideograms that make up her first name mean "*daughter of the Italian capital*". Her father was Count Naohiro Nabeshima (鍋島直大), Japan's plenipotentiary minister to Italy. The little girl returned to Japan at the age of seven months. In 1900, she married Prince Morimasa of Nashimotonomiya, thus becoming a member of the Japanese imperial family, which she left in 1947.
[533] 小田部雄次『梨本宮伊都子妃の日記』小学館, 1991. pp. 9-12.

for Austria on May 11.[534] Among the members, Hungarian reports mention twelve people: in addition to Itsuko and the prince, Seiji Okuyama (奥山清治 1876-1965), secretary of the embassy in Vienna, could be identified by name (the others were listed in the article with the following names and ranks: "*Marquis Yamanouchi, Princess Fushimi, wife of the marquis, Baron Uchida, Japanese ambassador to Vienna, and his wife, Colonel Izumi Ando, Chamberlain Watanabe, Lady-in-waiting Riyoko-Sakorai, Colonel Fukuda, military attaché at the embassy in Vienna, Major Yoshioka, military assistant attaché, and Commander Hyakutate, naval attaché"*).[535] The entourage was assigned to the service of Franz Ervin, captain of the imperial and royal general staff. They stayed at the Hungária Hotel in Budapest. On Sunday afternoon, Franz Joseph visited the princely couple and conversed with them in French for a quarter of an hour. On the 8th, the princely couple and their entourage made a visit to the *Műcsarnok (Kunsthalle)*, where they viewed Benczúr's millennial painting, which they liked. They viewed the exhibition for about an hour. Afterwards, they went to the Park Club for brunch. At 7 p.m. on May 10, a gala dinner was held for them in the Buda Royal Palace. After lunch, His Majesty held a *cercle* in the István Room and conversed with the Japanese guests for about half an hour. The menu[536] for the gala dinner was as follows:

> *Potage imperiale, Bouchères à La Perigord, Dick à la Astrahan, Tête de boeuf, Gigot d'agneau, Coqs de bruyère à la St Hubert, Sorbets, Poulets de Styrie, Asperges en branches, Crème diplomate, Crème de fromage, Glaces variées, Dessert. Drinks: Old Sherry, Chateau Lafitte, Johannisberger Beerenauslese 1893, Moët et Chandon Impèrial, Szamorodni from 1891, Tokaji from 1886, Cognac Meukov from 1804, Curaçao Triple sec blanc*

At half past eight, Franz Joseph bid farewell to his guests. The delegation traveled on to Vienna on the 11th. That morning, they went to the Parliament, accompanied by Captain Franz of the General Staff. The Japanese guests repeatedly praised the splendor of the Dome Hall and admired the magnificent view from the Danube Corridor for a long time. From the Parliament, they returned to the Hungária Hotel for lunch, and at 2 p.m. were

[534]島田昌幸『東京のフランケンシュタイン:あるオーストリア=ハンガリー外交官の東京駐在 (1911-13)』(1.) In: 学習院高等科紀要, 第4号, 2006.7., pp. 80., 88-89.
[535] Budapesti Hirlap 1909.05.11. 110.szám
[536] Pesti Hirlap, 1909.05.11. 110. szám

driven to Nyugati Station in a court carriage where they were welcomed by Police Inspector Ferenc Pavlik and Stationmaster Daróczy. The Japanese guests then boarded the 2:30 p.m. express train to Vienna.[537] Among the more curious reports prompted by the visit was a rumor that today would undoubtedly be dismissed as a *hoax*:

> "*Everyone is speculating about why our king visited the Japanese prince first, even before the prince had been formally introduced. Prince Nashimoto is said to have brought His Majesty a ratified copy of the secret Japanese–Austro-Hungarian alliance treaty. (…) Our king therefore received him as the representative of an equal contracting party and, in effect, visited the Mikado on Sunday by calling on his representative in Budapest. The Japanese prince then attended an audience with His Majesty on the afternoon of the 10th and handed over the important treaty document. This alliance obliges Japan to commence hostilities against Russia from Manchuria immediately in the event that our Monarchy goes to war with Russia. Conversely, if Russia were to go to war with Japan, then we would do so from Galicia, etc. (…) This treaty, which is valid for ten years, was handed over to His Majesty by Prince Nashimoto on Monday.*"[538]

At the end of **August**, Budapest hosted the 14th International Medical Congress, attended by 1,995 foreign and 1,346 Hungarian physicians. Japan was represented by the bacteriologist Shibasaburō Kitasato (北里柴三郎 1853–1931) and the obstetrician-gynecologist Masakiyo Ogata (緒方正清 1864–1919).

1910

Between **January** 30 and 31, a Japanese ship captain journeyed to Budapest on a study trip to Europe. Accompanied by Ödön Palotay, he visited the capital's sights and major technical facilities.[539]

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[537] Pesti Hirlap 1909.05.12.
[538] Pesti Hirlap 1909.05.12. Translated by the Author
[539] Budapesti Hírlap, 1910-01-30 / 25. szám; the article features a certain *"Japanese battleship captain Kikno Matsumura, commander of the Japanese warship Mikasa"*

Between **March** 11 and 13, sociologist and politician Tongo Takebe (建部遯吾 1871–1945) made a trip to Kunszentmiklós during his study tour to Europe. He was accompanied by Dr. Adorján Morlin, clerk of Pest County. His first stop was the town hall, where he studied public administration, but he also visited schools, churches, the chief magistrate's office, and the tax office. Chief Magistrate Martinovics received him as well, and on the evening of the 11th a banquet for a hundred guests was held in his honor at the *Úri Kaszinó (Gentlemen's Casino)* of Kunszentmiklós. On the 12th he returned to Budapest and then traveled on to Constantinople.[540]

In **April**, members of the Fushiminomiya princely family spent time in Vienna and Budapest.[541] The delegation included Prince Horiyasu Fushiminomiya (伏見宮博恭王 1875–1946), his wife Tsuneko Fushiminomiya (伏見宮博恭王妃経子 1882–1939), a chief chamberlain, ladies-in-waiting, Major Kensaku Yoshioka (吉岡顕作 1874–1928), and aide-de-camp Junichi Kiyokawa (清河純一 1878–1935).[542] Details of the Japanese royal couple's visit are known from the Japanese side through the diary of Shizuo Matsuoka (松岡静雄 1878–1936), military attaché at the Japanese embassy in Vienna. Matsuoka was part of the diplomatic delegation that guided the Japanese royal couple in Budapest, and his account is the only reliable Japanese source on their visit on April 1 and 2. The delegation left Vienna for Budapest by train at 9:05 a.m. on April 1, arriving at 1:40 p.m. At the station, among others, Ödön Palotay of Várpalota, Japan's honorary consul in Budapest, and his wife awaited them with a large bouquet of flowers. A large crowd had gathered to welcome them, cheering at the sight of the Japanese visitors. After checking into the Hotel Hungária and discovering that their rooms overlooked the Danube and the castle, they were enchanted by the view. Following dinner that evening, they attended the opera to see *Tosca*.[543] To round off the night, Palotay invited the delegates to a Hungarian ball held in honor of the princely couple. The next day, Palotay collected the delegation in four carriages. In the morning they visited the castle and then the Danube, where they watched a gunboat parade in Óbuda before boarding a boat and sailing downstream – an experience the princely couple reportedly enjoyed very

[540] Budapesti Hirlap, 1910.03.12. 60. szám
[541] 島田昌幸『東京のフランケンシュタイン:あるオーストリア=ハンガリー外交官の東京駐在 (1911-13)』(1.) In: 学習院高等科紀要, 第4号, 2006.7., p. 63.
[542] still unidentified: "*Guzaburo-Tanaka, chief steward; Hasigonaki, lady-in-waiting; Sucuki, palace lady*"
[543] Budapesti Hirlap, 1910.04.02. 78. szám

much. Afterwards, they went to the Parliament, followed by the Museum of Fine Arts and the Agricultural Museum. As the guests departed in their cars, the curious crowd greeted them with shouts of "*Hurrah!*" and "*Banzai*!". At the evening reception, Palotay recited a Japanese text, which he delivered with correct grammar but, according to Macuoka, with a very "*peculiar pronunciation"*.[544] The Japanese delegation was accompanied by Baron Frankenstein, court secretary, and Lieutenant Commander Cicoli, whom the king had appointed as honorary guards. Prince Fushiminomiya and his wife visited Adolf Strausz together with the head of the Vienna embassy. The dinner took place on April 1, 1910, and the preserved menu reads as follows:

> *Caviar, Potage sux nids de Salanganes, Fogas de Balaton á la Hongroise, Cotelette d'agneau printainére, Caneton roti, Salade, Compote, Asperges nouvelles, Fantaisie Nippon, Fruits.*

The wines and beverages included *Szamorodni, Som, Szekszárdi, Champagne, Tokaji Aszú, and Kristály* (mineral water).[545] On April 2, they hosted Palotay at the Hungária Hotel, where the princess presented Mrs. Ödön Palotay with expensive Japanese silks and embroideries. Consul Palotay received a beautiful souvenir decorated with the insignia of the Japanese imperial family, and the couple gifted the Palotays a signed photograph of themselves. On April 3, the delegation departed for Vienna at seven o'clock in the morning.[546]

[544]松岡静雄『滞欧日記』東京、1982., pp. 109-112.
[545] Pesti Napló, 1910-04-02 / 78. szám
[546] Magyarország, 1910-04-05 / 80. szám

The Fushiminomiya couple in front of the Parliament, April 1910

The Prince and Princess of Fushiminomiya in a military automobile at the Óbuda shipyard, April 1910.

The *Yamagata* group performed at the Beketow Circus in Budapest between **May** and June.

In **May**, the Japanese Horse Policy Office dispatched one of its high-ranking officials, Kenkichi Tange (丹下謙吉 1858–1929), on a short visit to Hungary to purchase horses. He was accompanied by Cavalry Commander Shigeyuki Nitahara (仁田原重行 1862–1925). (Tange had previously undertaken a journey to Hungary.)

On **May** 18–19, Takeo Mitsumatsu (三松武夫 1876–1934), State Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, spent time in Hungary on behalf of the Japanese Ministry of Trade and Agriculture to assess the work of Hungarian industrial organizations.[547] His primary interest was in studying Hungarian public institutions and the domestic economy. Accompanied by military attaché Shizuo Matsuoka (松岡静雄 1878–1936), he visited the Agricultural Museum in City Park, where they were guided by Ödön Palotay. They spent several hours there, focusing in particular on silk production and Hungarian crop cultivation. They were received by Ferenc Saárossy-Kapeller, Ministerial Counselor and Director of the museum. In addition to the museum, they also paid a visit to other agricultural institutions.[548]

In **June**, Kenkichi Tange (丹下謙吉 1858–1929), accompanied by a horse-breeding inspector and another Japanese national, met with Count Béla Serényi, Minister of Agriculture, to acquire breeding animals. At Mezőhegyes, they purchased 15 breeding stallions – Gidrán, Nonius, Furioso, and North – and conducted a tour of Bábolna and Kisbér.[549]

On **June** 10, Iesato Tokugawa (徳川家達 1863–1940), president of the Japanese House of Lords; Masayuki Sengoku (仙石政敬 1872–1935), First Secretary of the Japanese House of Lords; a Japanese count; and the chargé d'affaires of the Japanese Embassy in Vienna arrived in Budapest from Vienna. They were welcomed by Ödön Palotay at Keleti Railway Station and then driven by car to the Hungária Hotel. The Japanese delegation spent only half a day in Budapest, during which they toured the city's main sights. They met with Count Pál Szapáry and visited the Parliament, where they were received by Arisztid Dessewffy, presidential advisor, and József Rudnyánszky, chamberlain of the House of Lords. Contemporary reports note that Tokugawa showed particular interest in Hungarian political affairs. The visitors also toured the Royal Palace, and in the evening Palotay hosted a gala dinner for them at the Hungária Hotel.[550]

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[547] 松岡静雄『滞欧日記』東京、1982., pp. 139-140.
[548] Budapesti Hirlap, 1910.05.19. 118. szám
[549] Vadász- és Versenylap 1910.06.11. 46. szám (The article mentions a certain *Lieutenant Colonel Dohihara T.* and a Japanese horse breeding inspector named *Hayashi Yoshio*.)
[550] Az Ujság, 1910-06-10 / 137. szám, the article mentions: *T. Okuda, chargé d'affaires at the Japanese Embassy* in Vienna, and a *count named H. Shitara*.

Between **June** 16 and 24, Baron Kanetake Ōura (大浦兼武 1850–1918), Minister of Agriculture, and his entourage, led by Satsuo Akizuki (秋月左都夫 1858–1945), Japanese ambassador to Vienna, made a trip to Kisbér, where they met with Count Péter Szapáry, ministerial advisor; Major Ákos Szabadhegyi, commander of the stud farm; and Gyula Ruisz, estate manager. They went on to Bábolna, where they were received by estate manager Géza Friderik and Colonel El Hedad Fadlallah. At the minister's express request, they were shown the public school in Bábolna, where the schoolchildren, led by their teachers, sang the national anthem for them in the schoolyard. Reports stated that the delegation came to Budapest thanks to the intervention of Ödön Palotay.[551]

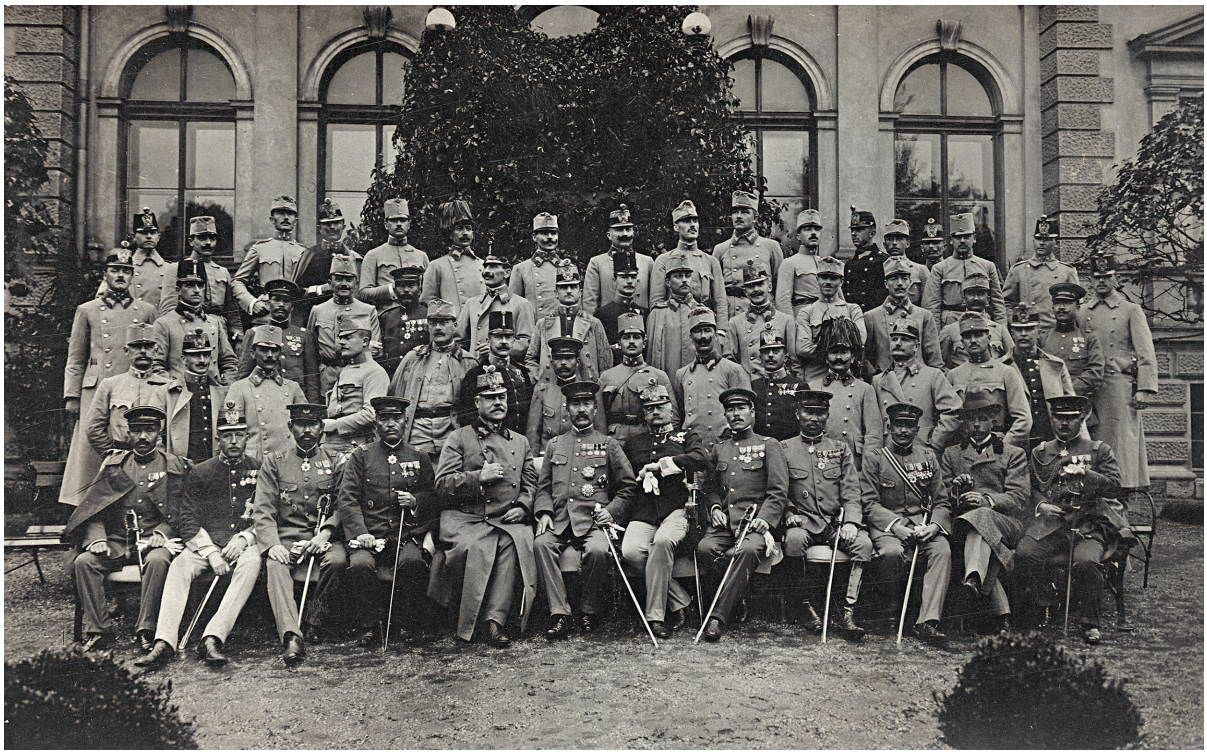
On **July** 5–6, a Japanese advisor to the Ministry of the Interior arrived in Budapest, accompanied by two government advisors from Formosa to study municipal affairs. They were received by Mayors Kálmán Fülepp and István Bárczy. Afterwards, led by the mayor's secretary, Szilárd Sztankovics, they toured the central market hall, the pig slaughterhouse, the bread factory, the state children's shelter, and the Kispest workers' settlement.[552]

On **August** 15, Keisuke Niwa (丹羽圭介 1856–1941), director of the Japanese Museum of Commerce, arrived in Budapest with two Japanese companions to prepare for a Japanese exhibition planned by the Japanese consulate in Budapest for Christmas. Together with Ödön Palotay, they visited the Museum of Applied Arts, which was to serve as the exhibition venue, and the Hungarian Royal Trade Museum. They were reportedly impressed by the library and the museum's collection. On August 16, they traveled on to London.[553]

Between **October** 11 and 14, Kageaki Kawamura (川村景明 1850–1926), Margrave, Japanese infantry general and head of the Japanese Military Study Committee, traveled to Budapest with his entourage to study military institutions.[554] They

[551] Vadász- és Versenylap 1910.06.28. 51. szám; Az Ujság, 1910-06-03 / 131. szám
[552] Magyarország, 1910-07-06 / 159. szám, Pesti Hirlap, 1910.07.06. 160. szám (Names and titles mentioned in the articles: *Dr. N. Nakagawa, Japanese Minister of Home Affairs, Head of the Urban Affairs Department; S. Miyoshi, Formosa Government Councilor; K. Iwamasa, Formosa Government Councilor*)
[553] Budapesti Hirlap, 1910.08.16. 194. szám, the other two Japanese mentioned in the article are *Morita, secretary of the Kyoto Exhibitors Association*, and *Fujimura, secretary of the Tokyo Exhibitors Association*.
[554] According to contemporary articles, the members of the entourage also included *Colonel Mano, Cavalry Lieutenant Colonel Uyeno, Staff Captain Takashima, and Morioka, attaché at the embassy in Vienna*.

were welcomed by Ödön Palotay. At Ludovika, they met with General József Braun, commander of the Academy, and Lieutenant Colonel István Stadler. The Ministry of Defense assigned Captain János Huba to accompany them. Major Ferenc Villányi demonstrated cavalry training, after which the delegation made a visit to the sports complex and military training facilities. They toured Manfréd Weisz's ammunition factory in Csepel and attended a performance at the Opera.[555] The visitors went on to the central riding school, where they were received by General Frigyes Lázár, inspector of the cavalry, and Lieutenant Colonel Baron Kolbert Zech, commander of the school. The Japanese were particularly interested in the service and officer horses, and the obstacle-jumping demonstrations "*truly aroused their admiration*". General Kawamura repeatedly expressed his surprise, noting that after witnessing these displays, he "*could appreciate the worldwide reputation of the Hungarian hussars*".[556]



Sixth from the left in the front row: General Kageaki Kawamura (Fortepan)

[555] Budapesti Hirlap, 1910.10.09. 240.szám; Magyarország, 1910-10-14 / 244. szám
[556] Az Ujság, 1910-10-14 / 244. szám

A Japanese actress, Hanako, or Hisa Ōta (花子 / 太田ひさ, 1868–1945), was on her second performance tour of Hungary, touring the cities of Pozsony (now Bratislava, Slovakia), Pécs, Fiume from **October** 24 to 29 with a group of three other actors.[557]

1911

This year, the Japanese Industrial Arts Exhibition was held in Budapest, which Japanese painter Keiichirō Kume (久米桂一郎 1866–1934) attended together with two other artists at the end of **January**.[558] At the conclusion of an interview with him about the exhibition, Budapesti Napló wrote the following:

> "*The Japanese teacher, whose politeness could not be surpassed even with the greatest effort, ended his speech with a smile and compliments. If one were to wait for him to leave the doorway first, one might remain in the Museum of Applied Arts forever. Mr. Kume shows an incredible persistence in courtesy and never forgets to smile when spoken to by a European.*"[559]

The organizers of the Japanese exhibition in Budapest in front of the lantern cabinet, 1911

[557] Doma Petra: *„A kicsiny asszony zsenijétől megkapva…" Hanako magyar körútja és a japán színház autentikusságának kérdése 1910 és 1911 között*. In: Távol-keleti Tanulmányok 16/1, 2024. pp. 121–142.
[558]近藤滋郎『ここは遠きのほとり–ハンガリーに行った日本人』In: Barátság – A Japán-Magyar Baráti Társaság folyóirata, 125. szám p. 5.; (The articles mention *Makoto Kanno, a teacher at the Tokyo Art Academy*, and two other Japanese people who also came with Kume.) Budapesti Napló, 1911. jan. 14. p. 10., Pesti Hírlap, 1911-01-27 / 23. szám, Pesti Hírlap1911-01-18 / 15. szám
[559] *A japán kiállítás*. Budapesti Napló, 1911. január 6. p. 12.

During **February**, the Tenka Troupe (天華組) performed at the *Fővárosi Orfeum* in Budapest for approximately one week, although the precise dates of the engagement are unclear. It is uncertain how many members participated, but the troupe may have consisted of four performers.[560]

On **February** 5, Takizaburō Tobari (戸張滝三郎 1866–1943), a jujitsu master of the Tokyo police force, visited Hungary for the second time since 1907.[561]

On **February** 22, a four-member delegation from the Japanese Embassy in Vienna undertook a journey to Budapest. They stayed at the Bristol Hotel, met with Ödön Palotay, and toured the Japanese exhibition at the Museum of Applied Arts, where they were welcomed and guided by Jenő Radisics.[562]

A Japanese actress, Hanako, or Hisa Ōta (花子 / 太田ひさ, 1868–1945), was on her third performance tour of Hungary, visiting the cities of Debrecen, Miskolc, Arad (now in Romania), Nagyvárad (now Oradea, Romania), Kolozsvár (now Cluj-Napoca, Romania), Brassó (now Brașov, Romania), Szeged, Nagybecskerek (now Zrenjanin, Serbia), Zenta (now Senta, Serbia), Szatmárnémeti (now Satu Mare, Romania), Nagykároly (now Carei, Romania), Lugos (now Lugoj, Romania), Szabadka (now Subotica, Serbia), and Kassa (now Košice, Slovakia) from **February** 27 to **May** 10 with a group of three other actors.[563] The troupe's popularity is demonstrated by reports that during their performance in Nyíregyháza in March 1911, the actors were greeted in Japanese at the railway station by university professor Vilmos Pröhle, who later hosted a reception in their honor, serving Japanese food to the guests.[564]

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[560] Az Ujság, 1911.02.16, 1911.02.21. The troupe was a highly successful, family-based company of Japanese magicians and illusionists that toured extensively throughout the United Kingdom, continental Europe, and parts of the British Empire during the late 1900s and 1910s. Unlike many other contemporary Japanese touring groups of the Meiji and Taishō eras – which focused heavily on high-flying acrobatics, foot-juggling, and tightrope walking – the Tenka Troupe built its reputation primarily through grand illusions, sleight of hand, and sophisticated water-based mechanics. For more info on the group, see: https://ninjin.co.uk/ten-ka-troupe/#:~:text=1910%20November%20%E2%80%93%20Hamburg,Japanese%20magicians%20top%20the%20bill (accessed: 2026 June)

[561] 松岡静雄『滞欧日記』東京、1982., Meiji 43, diary entry for February 5.

[562] Budapesti Hírlap, 1911-02-23 / 46. szám. According to the article, the members of the delegation were: *Baron Akizuki, Ambassador to Vienna; Okuyama, Embassy Secretary; Colonel Morioka; and Lieutenant Commander Matsuoka*.

[563] Doma Petra: *„A kicsiny asszony zsenijétől megkapva…" Hanako magyar körútja és a japán színház autentikusságának kérdése 1910 és 1911 között*. In: Távol-keleti Tanulmányok 16/1, 2024. pp. 121–142.

[564] Ujság (Kolozsvár), 1911. március 8., Nagyváradi Napló, 1911. március 3.

Around **May** 7, a Japanese engineer spent a few days in Arad County. The Emperor of Japan sought to build a modern industrial railway to serve his two million hectares of forest, so imperial engineers toured a number of European industrial railways. The engineer who arrived in Arad County first turned to the Ministry of Agriculture for assistance, where he was advised to study the local industrial railways. He then traveled to Nádas in Arad County, where he found a modern and practical industrial railway on the estates of József Grósz, a timber merchant from Lippa, which met all Japanese requirements. He also went to the industrial railways in Kladova, where he was guided by Károly Hammer, chief forestry advisor. The Japanese engineer left with a copy of the plans and a description of the Nádas industrial railway.[565]

On 4, 5 **June**, the Namba Japanese Imperial Troupe[566] performed at the Beketow Circus.[567]

Between **June** 19 and 21, a ten-member Japanese military delegation visited Budapest, where they were received by Ödön Palotay. On the 20th, they toured the Ludovika Academy and, later that afternoon, the *Magyar Királyi Zrínyi Miklós Honvéd Gyalogsági Hadapródiskola (Hungarian Royal Miklós Zrínyi Infantry Cadet School)* in Pécs. At Ludovika, they were welcomed by Major General Lehel Festl and Colonel Ferenc Netzer, and observed the cadets' gymnastics and combat demonstrations. In Pécs, they were received by Colonel Dezső Nónay, the school's commander. Afterwards, the delegation was escorted to their accommodation at the Nádor Hotel, and in the evening an officers' dinner was held in their honor.[568]

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[565] Nagybánya és Vidéke 1911.05.07. 19. szám. The article mentions a certain *Uyens Ariyoshi, imperial technical advisor and engineer*.

[566] The Namba Japanese acrobatic troupe was centered on Kumataro Namba and associates such as Otora/Otra Namba, Iku Namba, and child performers. The troupe was active roughly from the early 1900s to the late 1910s, performing across the United States (vaudeville theatres, circuses, fairs), and in major international showcases such as the 1910 Japan–British Exhibition in London. Their performances included highly physical "specialty acts" such as foot juggling, contortion, trapeze work, and especially dramatic stunts like "walking upstairs on the head", which became a signature attraction. The troupe's success depended heavily on child performers. The Namba organization repeatedly recruited, transported, or "acquired" children from Japan, many of whom were under 15 and trained for specific acrobatic roles. Accounts also document serious abuse and coercive labor practices within the troupe. Children reported harsh physical punishment, minimal food, and extremely low pay, while managers and adult figures justified these conditions as necessary training or even cultural practice. There are also accounts of runaway children alleging that they had been sold into long-term contracts and subjected to violent discipline. See: https://discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2022/10/16/japanese-acrobats-4/; https://twcu.repo.nii.ac.jp/records/2000060; https://ninjin.co.uk/1910s; (accessed: 2026 June)

[567] Pesti Napló, 1911-06-04

[568] Gál Attila: *A pécsi M. kir. Zrínyi Miklós honvéd gyalogsági hadapródiskola történetéből 1898-1944.* Bp. 2001.; The source mentions a certain *Major General Kazu Yamaguchi* as the head of the delegation, who could not be

Around **July** 2, a three-member delegation from the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce spent time in Budapest as part of a European study tour. In Budapest, they examined economic and agricultural institutions, ministry procedures, water management projects, soil improvement works, and labor administration at the Ministry of Agriculture. They were received by Ministerial Councillors Szomjas and Kvassay. The delegation also paid a visit to the Agricultural Museum, the Budafok cellar master course (winemaking course), the experimental obstetrics station and ampelological institute (grape-growing research institute), the Gödöllő apiary, the Gödöllő crown estate, the Museum of Applied Arts, and the municipal bread factory in the capital.[569]

On **July** 18, news broke that General Maresuke Nogi (乃木希典 1849–1912) would be coming to Budapest at the end of the month during his European tour, thanks to the intervention of Ödön Palotay. Nogi did indeed arrive in Budapest and departed for Vienna on July 30.[570]

On **August** 26, a Japanese professor accompanied by two other visitors attended the *Omnia* movie theater in Budapest to study the relationship between the development of European cinematography and public education. (They also visited London, Paris, and Vienna.) At *Omnia*, they examined the technical and health-protection equipment, and on the 27th they continued their journey to St. Petersburg.[571]

The *Hamamura group* toured Budapest between **October** 15 and 29, performing at the Royal Orfeum.

Between **October** 16 and 18, Eiichi Makino (牧野英一 1878-1970), professor of criminal law at Tokyo University, traveled to Budapest, where he met with Ármin

identified. Further articles: Pesti Hírlap, 1911-06-20 / 144. szám, Pesti Hírlap 1911-06-21 / 145. szám. The following names and titles appear in the articles: *Major General Yamaguchi, commander of the artillery brigade; Major General Toyobe, commander of the cavalry brigade; Major Hotta, military attaché in Vienna; Lieutenant Colonel Onoder; Lieutenant Colonel Nagasaka; Majors Narutaki and Miyoshi; Military Engineer Bank; Colonel Sato; Major Sato.*

[569] Budapesti Hirlap 1911. 07.02. 155. szám. The article features *S. Tsuruni, director of the Japanese Imperial Trade Museum, the Japanese government's commissioner for the Rome and Turin exhibitions, Dr. Udo, privy councilor, and Dr. Tsukida, privy councilor.*

[570] Világ Világ, 1911-07-18 / 168. Szám, Nagybánya és Vidéke, 1911-07-30

[571] Budapesti Hirlap, 1911.08.30. 205. szám. The article mentions a certain *Professor Tokoshiro*, a member of the '*Yokohama Hetai Cultural Association'*, plus two other people, without mentioning their names.

Vámbéry, who took him to the House of Representatives. He attended a hearing at the juvenile court and toured judicial institutions.[572]

Around **December** 16, a Japanese ceramics manufacturer visited the Zsolnay factory in Pécs after being in Turin to study an exhibition of ceramic objects (which included items from the Hungarian Zsolnay company, and where Miklós Zsolnay invited him to visit the site in Pécs).[573]

1912

In mid-**October**, Jigorō Kanō (嘉納治五郎, 1860–1938), a Japanese educator and martial artist best known as the founder of judo, undertook a journey to Hungary, and a short article was published about his visit to Nagykőrös. In Nagykőrös, he visited the Reformed high school, where he showed a particular interest in religious education. He then toured the classrooms and laboratories, "*and asked whether there was a swimming pool in the town. When he learned that there was not, he was deeply shocked*". From Nagykőrös, he traveled to Kocsér to study the Hungarian village.[574] In 1909, Kanō was appointed as the Japanese representative to the International Olympic Committee, and in May 1912, he traveled to Stockholm with two Japanese competitors for the V. Olympic Games. After the Olympics, Kanō embarked on a tour of Europe, and Miklós Szemere invited him to Budapest. (Miklós Szemere first contacted Kanō by correspondence in 1907 through the Japanese consul in Vienna.)[575]

1913

This year, geographer Tetsugorō Wakimizu (脇水鉄五郎 1867–1942) arrived in Hungary to study the agrogeological laboratory of the Geological Institute. According to some sources, he remained in Hungary until 1914 and conducted soil-testing with agrogeologist Péter Treitz.[576]

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[572] Budapesti Hírlap, 1911-10-18 / 247. szám
[573] Pécsi Napló, 1911-12-16 / 285. szám p. 2. The article mentions a certain *Shirano, a Japanese ceramics manufacturer and Tokyo majolica manufacturer*.
[574] Kecskemét Magyar Alföld, 1912. október 13.
[575] Magyar Alföld 1912.10.13., Budapesti Hírlap 1912.10.02.
[576] *Turán*. A Turáni Társaság folyóirata 1. (1913)1913 / 3. szám, Vakimiczu Tetsugoro: *A Szakuradsima tűzhányó kitörése Japánban*, Földrajzi Közlöny 1914. 1-2. pp. 38-40.

In **March**, Tokyo-based editor Shūho Chiba (千葉秀浦 ?–?) gave a presentation on Japan, which was perhaps the first major occasion on which the Hungarian public had the opportunity to hear a lecture by a Japanese speaker:

> "*Shuho Chiba, a Tokyo-based editor, armed with his knowledge of foreign languages, crossed the sea to accurately represent his country in Europe and dispel the many misconceptions that foreign travelers – often out of pure goodwill – had spread about it. He gave his free lecture at the Uránia Theater in Budapest, which was free of any pretension but all the more spiced with witty ideas. His lecture was accompanied by picturesque projected images, and Chiba noted that he could not praise the country, so when he spoke of its beauty, the audience should think of much more than that. Chiba began by saying in the warmest tones that he was delighted to have come to Hungary, whose past and present he had studied with great love and knew thoroughly. Ármin Vámbéry's book had been particularly helpful in this regard. He will now interpret his own experiences in his home country, so he wants to live in the Hungarian way and interact with Hungarian people. As a greeting, he welcomed the large, distinguished audience with a clearly pronounced Hungarian greeting. He wants all this in order to gain a perfectly accurate picture of our country. Because, he says, the misconceptions about Japan that circulate from mouth to mouth are mainly caused by the fact that foreign correspondents arrive, stay in European hotels, live in the European way, and interact with European people. 'They live like this in my country for a few weeks, and then they write a thick book about Japan.'*"[577]

> "*The little Japanese man with a black pince-nez, who gave the lecture in his national knight's uniform, had a surprisingly large and distinguished audience. He spoke with a strange German accent, occasionally throwing in an English word, but what he said gave the impression of a strikingly kind, intelligent, and clever man. He illustrated his lecture with colorful photographs and added brief*

[577] Sárossi Bella: *Japán felolvasó Budapesten*, Vasárnapi Újság, 1913. március. Source: *Huszadik század internetes archívuma*. http://www.huszadikszazad.hu/ (accessed: 2013 June) Translated by the Author

comments to each image. Then he gave a separate, continuous free lecture without pictures, and this second part was more direct and valuable. He walked slowly up and down the small stage, stopping now and then, and spoke, sometimes almost narrating, about Nippon, its morals, comparing it with European and other white countries. He demonstrated a rare and valuable quality: he interwove his speech with subtle humor and spiced it with erotic tones. Only a good gramophone could faithfully reproduce the entire lecture, which the audience listened to with rapt attention until the very last word. Particularly interesting was what he said about real geisha, Japanese married life, and Japanese revival. (...) Editor Chiba mentioned that he had been together with painter Gyula Tornai in Tokyo. He talked about the distorted views of Japan spread by passing globetrotters, while Árpád Pásztor, the Hungarian reporter, took a thorough look at everything, not staying in an international hotel, but in a Japanese house, living in the Japanese way for a while, and was therefore able to paint an honest, positive picture of the Japanese people. Chiba finally promised that he would write about Hungarians at home using the same method. The audience gave him and Pásztor a long ovation. A funny moment of the evening was when, during the intermission, Chiba was besieged by nearly a hundred ladies and gentlemen who wanted his autograph. He gave it to everyone with a polite smile."[578]

Chiba captivated the audience with his presentation, peppered with humorous stories. Here is one of them, based on a contemporary article:

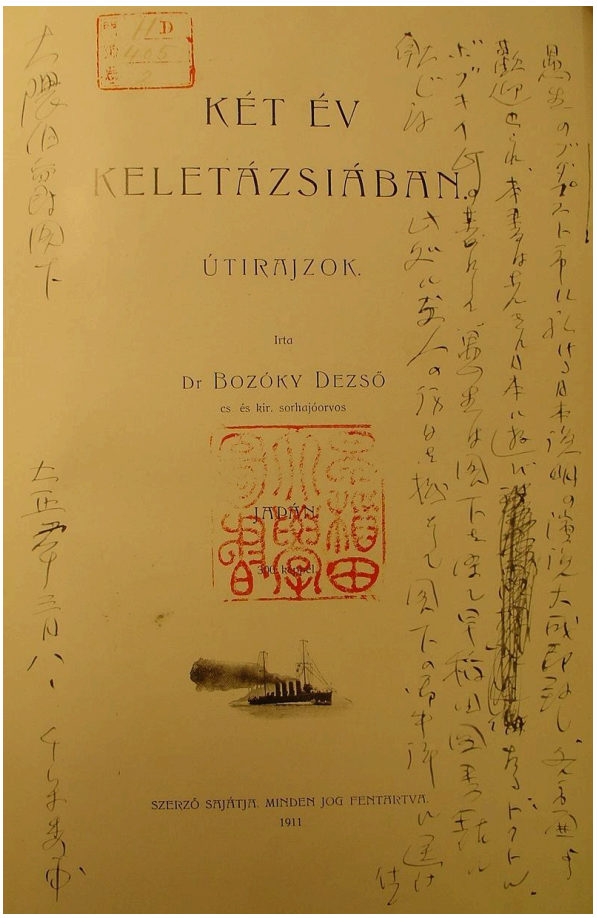
"*The witty Japanese man recounted in a very amusing way how the first European restaurant was received in his country thirty-five years ago. Of course, they were terribly curious about it, and most of them went to see it right after it opened. So did his father, who was a senior official in the Japanese Ministry of Maritime Affairs. He and a few of his colleagues went to the European restaurant and, in accordance with Japanese custom, sat down at a distance of one meter from the unusually high table. This is because in Japanese restaurants, it is the customary way to let the waiter know that the guest is hungry. But lo and behold!*

[578] Pesti Napló, 1913. 52. p. 15. Translated by the Author

The European waiter came and pushed their chairs hard until they were pushed completely under the table. They had to get used to this too, because in Japan, even today, people eat on low, almost tiny tables, squatting on the floor. Chiba senior and his companions had successfully overcome the difficulties of sitting down, but now they had to cope with European food. They managed this quite well, except that they couldn't figure out the purpose of one dish. Under a glass dome, there was a yellowish cube on the table. This was butter, which, after much deliberation, they figured out was used by Europeans to lubricate cuts on their lips caused by eating with knives."[579]

After the lecture on Japan, Chiba was presented with a copy of Dezső Bozóky's book on Japan, which was later given to Shigenobu Ōkuma, founder of one of Tokyo's renowned universities (Waseda University). The book can still be viewed today in the university library.

[579] Sárossi Bella: *Japán felolvasó Budapesten*, Vasárnapi Újság, 1913. március. Source: *Huszadik század internetes archívuma*. http://www.huszadikszazad.hu/ (accessed: 2013 June) Translated by the Author



Chiba's handwriting on the first page of Dezső Bozóky's book

From **October** 4 to 12, a Japanese actress, Hanako, or Hisa Ōta (花子 / 太田ひさ, 1868–1945), was on her fourth performance tour in Hungary, performing in Budapest with a group of three other actors.

Contemporary literature related to Hungary written by Japanese travelers

The following section examines descriptions of Hungary by Japanese travelers. Only a few diary-like travelogues exist, as most Japanese visitors came to the country (or passed through it) on study or official missions, leaving behind primarily professional texts and reports. Even in such works, we occasionally find brief introductions to the country and its position within the Monarchy, though these naturally allow less space for personal comments and impressions. Below, I discuss the most significant Japanese

diaries that record direct personal experiences of Hungary. These include the memoirs of Nobuaki Makino (牧野伸顕), Japanese ambassador to Vienna[580]; the travel diary of tea merchant Kahei Ōtani (大谷嘉兵衛 1845–1933)[581]; the diary of poet and writer Yoshikata Ikebe (池辺義象 1861–1923)[582]; the travel book of literary historian Katsumi Kuroita (黒板勝美 1874–1946)[583]; the writings of Shinpei/Junpei Shinobu (信夫淳平), secretary of the Japanese Imperial Embassy in Vienna[584]; the diary of naval attaché Shizuo Matsuoka (松岡静雄 1878–1936)[585]; and the memoirs of journalist Chisen Asahina (朝比奈知泉 1862–1939)[586].

Nobuaki Makino (牧野伸顕), Japan's minister and later ambassador to Vienna (1899–1906), mentioned Hungary only briefly in his memoirs, first published in 1948 and republished in 1977. He observed that Hungary had "*an unusually complicated relationship with Austria*" and that "*the two parties were roughly equal in the alliance*". He also noted that the Hungarian-inhabited regions were marked by a desire to secede from Austria, and that during the Russo-Japanese War, Hungarians expressed sympathy toward Japan.[587] Overall, Makino showed little sustained interest in Hungary, discussing Hungarians mainly in the context of Japan's political concerns.

Kahei Ōtani (大谷嘉兵衛), a tea merchant who promoted Japanese tea exports, published his travel diary in 1900 under the title *My Journey to the West*. Ōtani and several others were sent to America in 1899 to negotiate the abolition of high tariffs on Japanese tea. From Vienna, they arrived in Budapest on Sunday, December 10, 1899.[588] They stayed at the Grand Hotel Hungaria on the banks of the Danube and visited the castle and the underground on the same day. In his diary, Ōtani wrote that the Hungarians were originally a wild Asian people who had migrated to Europe and that they resembled the Mongols in language and appearance.[589] He commented on the hostile relations among Germans, Jews, Hungarians, and Slavs, as well as on the

[580] 牧野信顕『回顧録II』東京、昭和23年
[581] 大谷嘉兵衛『欧米漫遊日誌』, 1900.
[582] 池辺義象『欧羅巴』, 金港堂, 1902.
[583] 黒板勝美『西遊二年欧米文明記』文会堂書店, 1911年
[584] 信夫淳平『東欧の夢』東京、大正8年
[585] 松岡静雄『滞欧日記』東京、1982.
[586] 朝比奈知千『老記者の思ひ出』東京、昭和13年;『朝比奈知千文集』. 東京、昭和2年
[587] 牧野信顕『回顧録II』東京、昭和23年. pp. 219-221., 268., 308.
[588] 大谷嘉兵衛『欧米漫遊日誌』, 1900. p. 193.
[589] 大谷嘉兵衛『欧米漫遊日誌』, 1900. p. 195.

Hungarians' efforts to gain independence. According to Ōtani, Hungary was primarily an agricultural country, though it was increasingly striving to establish itself as an industrialized nation.[590] On the second day of his stay, he went to the Ministry of Justice and later visited the parliament. He praised the beauty of the parliament building and described in detail the distribution of seats among the representatives. He also met with the secretary of the Budapest Industrial Association, and in connection with this meeting, offered a brief analysis of the situation and activities of industrial associations.

Poet Yoshikata Ikebe (池辺義象) studied in Paris on a scholarship between 1898 and 1901. Before returning to Japan, he traveled through Europe and kept a diary of his journey, which was published in 1902.[591] Based on the diary, he arrived in Hungary with several companions on October 22, 1900, and remained in Budapest until the 24th. Ikebe was captivated by Budapest, whose beauty he felt rivaled that of Paris. He toured the castle, the parliament building, several museums, and a university, about which he wrote at length, praising the high standard of Hungarian education. Hardly any aspect of the country failed to interest him: everyday life, history, and even architecture drew his attention. In his writings, he repeatedly mentioned Lajos Kossuth as Hungary's greatest hero. He was impressed by how Hungarians wove their country and history into conversations, regardless of the topic. While visiting the Hungarian National Museum, Ikebe and his companions met the Japanese entomologist Shōnen Matsumura (松村松年), who was then working in Hungary and became their guide on sightseeing tours of Budapest. During one walk, the group stopped at the *Japán Kávéház (Café Japan)*[592], where their presence caused a minor sensation. Ikebe commemorated his arrival in Hungary and his subsequent departure in a series of poems, one of which is presented below.

匈牙利ほにあらはれてさからゆく
かげこそ見ゆれダニューブの川

[590] 大谷嘉兵衛『欧米漫遊日誌』, 1900. pp. 199-200.
[591] 池辺義象『欧羅巴』, 金港堂, 1902.
[592] The *Japán Kávéház (Café Japan)* in Budapest, opened in 1894 on Andrássy Avenue, was one of the city's most fashionable coffeehouses at the turn of the 20th century. Despite its name – and a few decorative 'Japanese' wall paintings – it had little to do with Japan; rather, it evoked exoticism and modernity. It became a favorite gathering place for artists, writers, and intellectuals, known for its elegant interior, lively atmosphere, and cultural events.

Katsumi Kuroita (黒板勝美), Doctor of Japanese Literature and historian at Tokyo Imperial University, journeyed to Budapest in 1909 during a self-financed tour around the world. He left behind one of the most detailed and engaging accounts of Budapest from that time – so much so that it could almost be mistaken for a modern travel guide (he frequently commented on the architectural styles of the buildings he visited; apart from him, only Ikebe made similar observations). His travelogue was published in 1911, with about eight pages devoted specifically to Hungary and Budapest. According to Kuroita, the peoples of Austria were in constant struggle, including the Hungarians, who were suffering politically and ethnically and becoming increasingly conscious of their national identity. He noted that while almost all Hungarians understood German, they disliked speaking it, often preferring French or English instead. The ornamentation, forms, and design of Budapest's buildings, he observed, emphasized Hungarian character as much as possible in order to stimulate national consciousness. Anti-German sentiment, together with the cultivation of national identity, was evident in nearly every sphere of life, though always expressed within the bounds of good taste and propriety. In Kuroita's view, Hungary was striving for independence from Austria, but Austria would not allow it. He believed that Budapest could compete with any major European city, citing the innovative *Telefonhírmondó (Telephone News Service)*[593] – unique at the time – as evidence of large-scale urban development. Kuroita toured Budapest's major museums almost obsessively: the National Museum, the Agricultural Museum, the Museum of Applied Arts, and the Museum of Fine Arts. He noted with interest that the Museum of Applied Arts even held Japanese art magazines. At the Agricultural Museum, he was particularly fascinated by what he saw, remarking that Japan, still heavily dependent on agriculture, could benefit greatly from Hungary's achievements in the field. The visit convinced him that Japan should establish a similar institution. He described his time at the Museum of Fine Arts as an unforgettable experience.[594]

Shinpei/Junpei Shinobu's (信夫淳平) work, *The Dream of Eastern Europe*, is a voluminous and substantial study. Shinobu served at the Japanese Embassy in Vienna

[593] The *Telefonhírmondó*, established in Budapest in 1893, was one of the world's first subscription-based telephone news services, transmitting news, announcements, and entertainment directly to subscribers' homes.
[594]黒板勝美『西遊二年欧米文明記』文会堂書店, 1911年, 四六　黄都ブダペストの活動，pp. 440-448.

from 1910. In the introduction to the book, published in 1919 but likely written before the war, he reflects that pre-war Europe now seems like a dream. The work began as a personal diary, in which he recorded his observations and experiences during his posting. In its final form, the diary excerpts serve primarily as supplements to his extensive analyses. This combination makes Shinobu's work the most complete and objective Japanese travelogue on Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Shinobu observed daily life and political developments with constant attention, but he was equally interested in the press, population trends, and the economic systems of the countries he visited. In relation to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, he wrote about Schönbrunn Palace, contemporary diplomacy, the history of the Habsburgs, Viennese fashion, the Austrian parliament, and political affairs. He traveled widely, visiting Vienna, Budapest, Trieste, Venice, Fiume, and other cities. He devoted separate chapters to the ethnic situation in the Monarchy and the efforts to Magyarize the territories of the Hungarian Crown, drawing on contemporary statistics (mainly from 1908–1911). Shinobu regarded tensions arising from Hungarian nationality policies as a serious problem, and in his discussion he cited several Western authors on the topic, including Scotus Viator[595], Dr. Palacký[596], and Rudolf Springer. At this point, the diary material transforms into a more rigorous scholarly study. Shinobu wrote that the Hungarians came from the East and, through King Stephen, adopted Western Christian culture before mixing with other European ethnic groups. As a result, "*they do not look very Eastern and, at first glance, do not differ from white people*".[597] He described the Revolution of 1848 in detail, while also presenting an overview of 19th-century Hungarian history. In diary excerpts included in the book, Shinobu mentioned a visit to a children's home in Budapest. In connection with this, he gave a detailed account of child education in Hungary. He pointed out that "*Hungary is considered a leader in this regard throughout Europe*" and "*Hungary's pride is its state-run children's home system*", adding that in this respect "*the Japanese have a lot to learn from the Hungarians*".[598] In

[595] Scotus Viator was the pseudonym of British historian Robert Seton-Watson (1879–1951), who wrote on the ethnic and political tensions in Austria-Hungary, advocating for the rights of oppressed nationalities.
[596] Dr. František Palacký (1798–1876) was a Czech historian and politician, known as the "Father of the Nation", who documented Czech history and promoted national identity within the Austrian Empire.
[597] 信夫淳平『東欧の夢』東京、大正8年, p. 109.
[598] 信夫淳平『東欧の夢』東京、大正8年, pp. 42-43.

his book, the Hungarians are not portrayed as an Asian people, but rather as belonging to the Aryan ethnic group, who, by their nature, found it difficult to identify with other European nations. Consequently, although they lived alongside other European peoples, their pride naturally grew stronger, since they rarely "*asked for help from those around them*". As a result, the unity of the Hungarian people crystallized, and in time they also gained real power.[599] Thus, Shinobu argued, they came to occupy "*the most dominant position among the other peoples*". According to him, the Hungarians represented a significant force, rising above others with their "*vitality, progressiveness, and unity*". However, the downside was that their electoral system and constituencies primarily favored Hungarians themselves, preventing minorities from achieving adequate representation in parliament. Reading the book, we also come across some humorous passages. For example, Shinobu asked an Austrian who spoke Hungarian well about the correct pronunciation of the word "Magyar". The Austrian replied in English: "*The Magyar's 'gy' should be pronounced as 'd', which is closest to the original pronunciation – so it should sound like 'Madyar'. Hungarians are naturally crazy guys, so there is no doubt that pronouncing 'Magyar' as 'mad' best expresses their true nature*".[600] Shinobu greatly enjoyed this unusual answer. He also recounts stories about the relationship between Hungarians and Austrians. He found it curious that non-Hungarian place names in Hungary had Hungarian equivalents, but that Austrians, too, often had to deal with Hungarian names for their own cities. He wrote that if, for example, a parcel from Austria arrived in Hungary addressed to 'Hermanstadt'[601], the Hungarian postal service – deliberately, in the opinion of many – returned it to the sender marked as 'unknown destination'. But the Austrians also returned shipments to the sender if 'Vienna' was not written as 'Wien'.[602] Another anecdote concerned trains bound for Vienna: the signs often displayed 'Bécs' (the Hungarian name for Vienna) instead of Wien. Furthermore, because of a regulation requiring Hungarian railway workers to speak only Hungarian, the conductor would shout "Bécs". Many foreign travelers, not recognizing the Hungarian name, failed to realize the train had reached

[599] 信夫淳平『東欧の夢』東京、大正8年, p. 119.
[600] 信夫淳平『東欧の夢』東京、大正8年 p. 114. Translated by the Author.
[601] Hermanstadt is the German name for Sibiu, a historic city in Romania. In Hungarian it is called Nagyszeben.
[602] 信夫淳平『東欧の夢』東京、大正8年, p. 122.

Vienna and accidentally continued past their stop. By contrast, Shinobu devoted considerably less attention to Hungarian industrialization. Only one short chapter discusses railway policy, in which he wrote that the Hungarian government supported development with all its might. Thanks to this, "*the Hungarian railway is almost flawless in terms of track length, fares, transfer options, and speed*".[603] During his stay in Budapest, Shinobu visited the Hungarian Parliament, and in this connection he wrote extensively about Hungarian politics, the electoral system, and the constitution.

Shizuo Matsuoka (松岡静雄 1878–1936) served as naval attaché at the Japanese Embassy in Vienna in 1911–1912. His diary covers a period of just under three years, recording his personal experiences of everyday life, friendships, work, politics, diplomacy, and – unusually for a military attaché – cultural events. The diary focuses mainly on his time in Vienna and has only limited relevance to Hungary. Nevertheless, it is a highly valuable primary source, as it mentions Japanese travelers in Budapest and provides insight into the young Japanese scholarship students arriving in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, for whom the Monarchy represented a stronghold of military and medical science. From Matsuoka's description, we also learn how the Japanese princely couple Fushiminomiya spent their time during their 1910 visit to Hungary. The diary does not deal specifically with Hungarians or with Hungarian social, political, or historical issues, and in this regard only a few examples can be given. Matsuoka, for instance, responded sensitively to the Jewish question in Hungary. On February 24, 1911, while traveling from Budapest to Vienna, he came across an article in a German-language newspaper reporting on the drowning of a Jewish child, which remarked that there was now "one less" Jew. Matsuoka condemned this, noting that Jews are human beings and that superstitious fears about them had grown excessively among Hungarian and Austrian peasants.[604] Matsuoka also frequently accompanied high-ranking Japanese officials visiting Hungary. When Prince and Princess Fushiminomiya toured Budapest in 1910 and went to the Parliament, he wrote:

> "*The royal couple entered the Parliament, whose luxurious beauty, considering that it was completed only ten years ago, is still capable of dazzling the human*

[603] 信夫淳平『東欧の夢』東京、大正8年, p. 144. Translated by the Author.
[604] 松岡静雄『滞欧日記』東京、1982., p. 342.

eye. It is no coincidence that it was these people who built the most beautiful parliament in the world. Unfortunately, what makes this dazzlingly beautiful Parliament unique is that it is associated with war and bloodshed".[605]

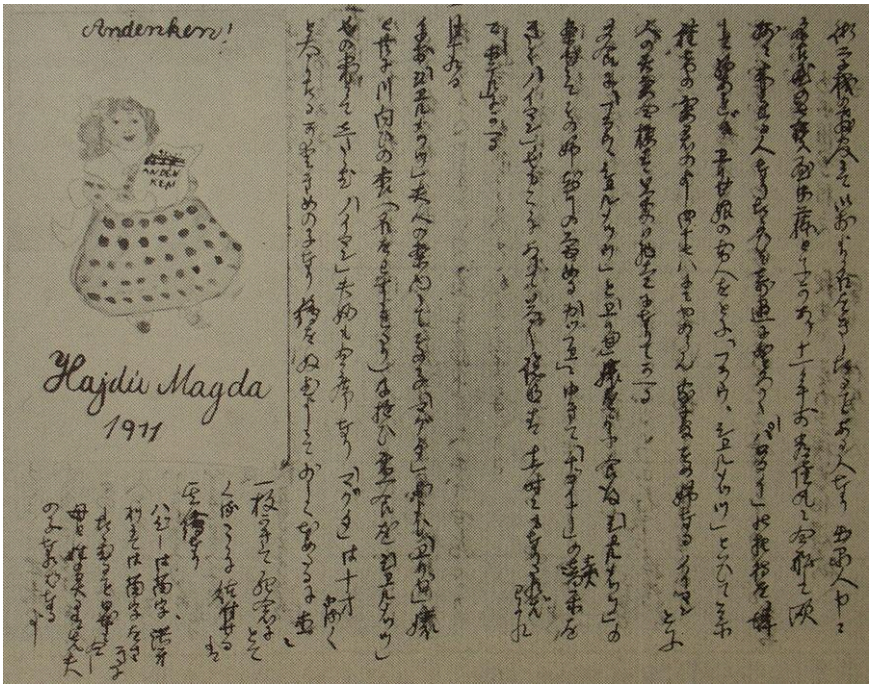
He noted of the Hungarians that

"*These people consider themselves to be of Eastern origin and regard us as their brother nation (...) It is a very good feeling that wherever we go, they worry about making sure that everything is properly prepared for our reception...*".[606]

Matsuoka's diary entries provide valuable insight into the activities of Ödön Palotay, Japan's honorary consul in Budapest. Palotay frequently hosted the attaché as well as Japanese visitors to the city. In a diary entry dated June 11, 1910, Matsuoka wrote appreciatively about the warm hospitality Palotay had shown him on an earlier visit. At the same time, he observed that Palotay seemed less enthusiastic about Japanese food, though he "*enjoyed the drink very much*".[607] Matsuoka's friendly nature won over many people, including Magda Hajdú, the ten-year-old daughter of a Hungarian family, who presented him with a drawing as a gift. He described her affectionately:

"*Magda is a cute, chubby ten-year-old girl who loves to draw. A few words of praise were enough, and she drew me a picture, which I kept as a souvenir.*"[608]

[605] 松岡静雄『滞欧日記』東京、1982., pp. 111-112. Translated by the Author.
[606] 松岡静雄『滞欧日記』東京、1982., p. 112. Translated by the Author.
[607] 松岡静雄『滞欧日記』東京、1982., p. 150. Translated by the Author.
[608] 松岡静雄『滞欧日記』東京、1982., pp. 239-240. Translated by the Author.



Drawing by Magda Hajdú in Shizuo Matsuoka's diary entry from January 18-19, 1911

Let us now follow the attaché's visits to Budapest as recorded in his diary. On May 17, 1910 (Meiji 43), Matsuoka arrived from Vienna with a Japanese ministerial envoy, Takeo Mitsumatsu (三松武夫). After checking into the Hotel Hungaria, they walked to the city center, stopping by the Parliament along the way. They then met Palotay, who accompanied them to the Agricultural Museum. Upon returning to the hotel, Palotay took his leave, while Matsuoka and Mitsumatsu enjoyed a beer at a café on the banks of the Danube. Back at the hotel, they encountered two other Japanese visitors – Kenkichi Tange (丹下謙吉) and Shigeyuki Nitahara (仁田原重行) – who had come to Hungary to purchase horses. After a pleasant conversation, they spent the evening once again in Palotay's company. He toasted them with champagne and invited the Japanese guests to attend a Hungarian ball that evening. The following day, May 18, Mitsumatsu visited the Ministry of Agriculture to carry out his mission of evaluating the domestic activities of industrial organizations. Palotay once again served as their guide during a tour of Budapest. That evening, the two Japanese men returned to Vienna.[609] Other noteworthy entries date from January 18 and 19, 1911, and concern the

[609] 松岡静雄『滞欧日記』東京、1982., pp. 139-140.

Japanese exhibition in Budapest. Matsuoka recounts that the director of the Hungarian Museum of Fine Arts had long shown interest in Japanese artifacts, some of which he had purchased at world exhibitions. After visiting the 1910 Anglo-Japanese Exhibition, the director was so impressed that he requested permission for part of it to be displayed in Hungary. Palotay played a mediating role in arranging the exhibition, which eventually came to fruition. True to his promise to Palotay, Matsuoka attended the opening and was struck by the large number of children and women among the visitors. In his diary entry for the following day, January 19, he noted that he returned to the exhibition and attempted to ask visitors questions about it, but often failed to understand their replies, as many spoke Hungarian rather than German. He described a humorous incident in which a few visitors mistook him for an exhibitor; as a result, he ended up selling some Japanese items to them in place of the actual salesperson. Matsuoka closed his account with a wry remark about the Japanese ambassador, who had been ill and absent from the event: "*While there are diplomats who shy away from presenting Japanese objects, there are military attachés who are happy to stand in for the salesperson – we are not all the same; that's how the world is*".[610] On February 22, 1911, the Japanese delegation, including Matsuoka, returned to Budapest. That day they explored the castle, and in the evening attended the closing of the Japanese exhibition. Later, at the invitation of the Palotays, they went to the opera, where an Italian play was performed in Hungarian – a performance the Japanese could not understand a word of. The following day they had lunch at the Palotays' residence before arriving at the castle at half past seven, where a grand ball was taking place. Matsuoka noted the immense crowd, comparable to that of Vienna, with as many as 1,800 guests in attendance. In his diary, he remarked that the Hungarian ball "*differs from the Viennese balls in that, according to old Hungarian custom, the guests are dressed in Hungarian noble costumes. A wide range of garments adorned with fur, silk, and embroidery parade before us. With their huge, curved swords at their sides, they look like brigand chiefs"*.[611]

[610] 松岡静雄『滞欧日記』東京、1982., pp. 238-240. Translated by the Author.
[611] 松岡静雄『滞欧日記』東京、1982., p. 251. Translated by the Author.

Chisen Asahina (朝比奈知泉, 1862–1939) was a journalist who published his book *Memoirs of an Old Journalist* in 1938.[612] He wrote about the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and its foreign policy in the late 1890s on several occasions. In *Memoirs of an Old Journalist*, however, he devoted only a few pages to the Hungarians. He likely visited Hungary more than once – first in 1896, and then again around 1913, shortly before the First World War. Asahina noted that he was most strongly influenced by a professor named Adolf Strausz, whom he met several times. He recorded one particularly memorable encounter as follows:

> "*I did not ask him which university he taught at, nor did I ask about his origins, but he may have been Jewish. The situation of ethnic groups is similar everywhere, so there are many people in Hungary who do not like Jews. So much so that Budapest is sometimes called Judapest because of its large Jewish population. Once, during a conversation, I brought up this topic without realizing it, but I could see from the professor's expression that it would be better to talk about something else, so I quickly finished what I had to say. Looking more closely at his face, the shape of his nose led me to conclude that he was of Jewish descent. I didn't ask what this teacher's field of expertise was, but you can talk to him about anything, first and foremost in his native language, Hungarian, but also in German, French, Italian, English, and Russian. What's more, he speaks all of these languages quite well. When I mentioned to him how amazing his language skills were, the teacher simply said with a calm expression: 'there are advantages and disadvantages to speaking many languages. In other words - he said with a subtle smile - it's good for making fools of ourselves not only in front of our own people, but also in front of foreigners.'*"[613]

[612] 朝比奈知千『老記者の思ひ出』東京、昭和13年
[613] 朝比奈知千『老記者の思ひ出』東京、昭和13年, pp. 135-136. Translated by the Author

Chisen Asahina, Adolf Strausz and Kotarō Mochizuki (Uj Idők, 1905.)

Asahina wrote very little about Hungarians, mentioning them only briefly in a chapter describing the territories of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, to which he even added a contemporary anecdote.

> "*His Majesty Franz Joseph was called 'Kaiser' in Austria, but in Hungary, which made up half of the Monarchy's territory, they refused to call him Kaiser under any circumstances, using the title 'King' instead. It must have been in Budapest, when Kenjirō Den*[614] *came to the international telegraph conference, that he addressed His Majesty with the English title 'Your Emperor'. At that moment, a Hungarian representative turned to him with a serious expression and said, 'In our country, we only have a king, not an emperor'. Kenjirō Den then thought that this was a terribly niggling country.*"[615]

Asahina also wrote that Hungarians are one of the Asian peoples in Europe, but

> "*they have lost their Asian character to such an extent that they hardly look Asian at all, either in appearance or religion. However, their names, both written and spoken, begin with the family name and end with the given name. I regret a little*

[614] Kenjirō Den (田健治郎 1855–1930), an official who later became head of the Japanese Ministry of Information and Telecommunications, visited Hungary in 1896.
[615] 朝比奈知千『老記者の思ひ出』東京、昭和13年, pp. 178-179. Translated by the Author

that, on our business cards used in Europe, we have written our names in the European way – that is, in reverse order."[616]

Japan in Hungarian Publications; Hungary in Japanese Publications

At the end of the 19th century, numerous newspaper articles about Japan appeared in Hungary. The popular weekly Vasárnapi Újság, for example, published 87 articles on the country between 1854 and 1903, most of which introduced Japanese culture, history, and everyday life. During the Russo–Japanese War (1904–1905), the number of Japan-related articles in Vasárnapi Újság rose sharply, with 55 pieces focusing primarily on the war and its political background.[617] In addition to weekly newspapers, many Hungarian scholarly and professional journals[618] also published articles on Japan, written by well-known scholars such as János Hunfalvy,[619] Aurél Török Ponori,[620] Ármin Vámbéry,[621] and János Xántus[622] (who had visited Japan). Some periodicals and newspapers even devoted entire issues to Japan: *A Jövendő* in 1904 and *Magyar Szemle* in 1906 published issues consisting exclusively of articles about the country.[623]

For those interested in military history, the series of articles on the Russo–Japanese War published in the *Ludovika Akadémia Közleményei (Ludovika Academy Bulletin, 1904–1905)* still offers many valuable insights. Another noteworthy source is the series of diary entries by military attaché Béla Dáni, comprising seven thick notebooks that remain unpublished to this day.[624] Béla Dáni, a staff captain, was

[616] 朝比奈知千『老記者の思ひ出』東京、昭和13年, pp. 183-184. o. Translated by the Author
[617] 近藤正憲『20世紀初頭ハンガリーで出版された日本語教科書とその時代背景』, p. 188. ; 近藤正憲『戦間期における日洪文化交流の史的展開』千葉大学大学院、社会文化科学研究科, 学位論文, 1999. pp. 18-57.
[618] Buda Attila (szerk.): *Messziről felmerülő, vonzó szigetek II/1. – Japánról szóló, magyar nyelvű források 1870-től a japán-kínai háborúig*. Ráció, Budapest, 2012. pp. 21-25.
[619] Budapesti Szemle, 1869. XIII. kötet, 174-204., 277-322., XIV. kötet, pp. 59-82., 129-160
[620] *Egy ősi emberfajtáról Ázsia keleti szélén. Anthropogeographiai tanulmány.* In: Budapesti Szemle, 1889. 146. szám, pp. 177-201.; 147. szám, pp. 358-383.; 148. szám, pp. 13-41. ; 149. szám, pp. 212-244. ; 150. szám, pp. 340-386.
[621] Budapesti Szemle, 1895. pp. 349-363.
[622] Hazánk s a Külföld, XI. kötet, 1870. Vasárnapi Újság, 1874. pp. 163-164.; 178-179.; 194-196.
[623] Buda Attila (szerk.): *Messziről felmerülő, vonzó szigetek II/2. – Japánról szóló, magyar nyelvű források 1896-tól az első világháború végéig*. Ráció, Budapest, 2014. p. 23.
[624] Hadtörténelmi Levéltár VII. Fondfőcsoport, Personalia 22. *Dáni Béla Japánba kirendelt katonai attasé naplói és iratai az orosz-japán háborúról*

sent by the Minister of War to the Japanese headquarters to study military operations, an assignment given due to his status as one of the most highly trained staff officers.[625] He began keeping his diaries in German in May 1904. The entries mainly contain copies of contemporary diplomatic reports and descriptions of events in the Russo–Japanese War, including situation reports, diplomatic telegrams, detailed accounts of troop movements, and notes on military technology. The diaries feature numerous illustrations, military maps, and tables alongside the texts.

In general, Japan-related knowledge in Hungary during this period was dominated by history, politics and diplomacy, the natural sciences (geography, anthropology, ethnography, botany, and zoology), art, religion, and military sciences. Unsurprisingly, Japan appeared regularly – though briefly – in contemporary geography textbooks used in Hungarian secondary schools, high schools, and technical colleges, as well as in major Hungarian-language dictionaries and encyclopedias.[626] A comprehensive introductory account of Japan, based on Western sources, was published in 1901 by Géza Kelemen under the title *A Mikádó országa (The Land of the Mikado)*.

In Japan, too, numerous writings about Hungary appeared before World War I, though these were mainly professional in nature. The books preserved in the National Diet Library of Japan include specialist works, diaries, official ministry publications, reports, geography books, and translations. Hungary was rarely the subject of a separate volume; it was usually covered within works presenting Europe or other countries of the world. Approximately thirty books contain chapters on Hungary, addressing a wide variety of topics, such as mulberry cultivation, trade association laws, poultry farming and egg production, forestry, the women's equality movement, the money market, the salt industry, the tobacco industry, economic geography, the state of libraries, the navy, the banking system, war horse breeding, foreign policy, political history, constitutionalism, socialist movements, smallpox vaccination, railway history,

[625] *Magyar tiszt a háboru főhadiszállásán*. Battonya és Környéke Társadalmi Hetilap, III. évf. 7. szám, 1904. február 14., p. 4.
[626] Buda Attila (szerk.): *Messziről felmerülő, vonzó szigetek II/1. – Japánról szóló, magyar nyelvű források 1870-től a japán-kínai háborúig*. Ráció, Budapest, 2012. pp. 22-27.

ophthalmology, and more. Even the Hungarian girls were deemed worthy of mention in a short chapter of 万国女子風俗 *(Women's Customs Around the World)*, published in 1903:

> "*Upon arriving in Hungary, the first thing that catches the eye is the sight of beautiful women dressed in their finest, adorned with rose hairpins. While none stand out as particularly striking, none are unattractive either. Most are cheerful and elegant, generally well-suited to their attire. As dusk falls and the clatter of carriages ceases, the sight of these beauties strolling leisurely along the quiet roadside is a picture-perfect scene. Among the many young women, none are of dubious character, nor does any lead her friends astray. Nor are there any who flaunt their pedigree with arrogance. They are all Jewish heiresses, radiant with jewels and makeup. After the Corso parade ends, the Hungarian women enter coffee houses or beer halls. They enjoy listening to the violin's tearing and meowing-like sounds. They also take pleasure in listening to the military band's spirited ensemble. Meanwhile, they begin drinking beer, wine, and various spirits. They order paprika stews. They make a truly merry racket. They try to delay their return home as long as possible.*"[627]

Another text from 1907 lamented why Hungary was so lively and vigorous:

> "*Like Austria, Hungary is home to a diverse mix of ethnic groups, which could be said to make it difficult to govern. Yet, even within this same confederation, roughly half of its 19 million population consists of pure Hungarians. This sheer numerical strength alone overpowers other ethnic groups. If Hungarians decide to act, it happens whether others like it or not. This is a tremendous blessing for Hungary. It means unity and cohesion comes easily. After all, nothing is stronger than the power of unity. While Austria is constantly embroiled in conflict, Hungary always marches in step. Even so, it's regrettable that they remain tied to Austria. Yet, with such unity, they can rally instantly when needed. It's no wonder Austria is perpetually on edge, anxious that Hungary might turn against them. Anyone who has been to Hungary will tell you: while Austria seems somehow feeble and worn out, Hungary is vibrant, brimming with life. Everywhere you go, the drive for independence is palpable. The term "Kingdom of Hungary" comes to mind before*

[627] 渋谷馬頭『万国女子風俗』国光社, 1903, pp. 38-39. Translated by the author.

"Austrian Empire"; whatever they say, it's always "our Hungary". In other words, the Austro-Hungarian Empire doesn't exist in the eyes of Hungarians. They tolerate the Austrian emperor for now, but privately they think – nay, openly declare – that Hungary will become an independent nation in Europe. They are preparing for this by advancing their country, developing commerce and industry. And honestly, witnessing that courage is truly heartening."[628]

Some newspaper articles also focused on Hungarians. For instance, the Tokyo-based newspaper Romaji featured two articles about notable Hungarians in 1906. One praised Count Jenő Zichy for his travels in Asia, while the other highlighted the linguist and orientalist Vilmos Prőhle for his expertise in the Japanese language and literature. Written by the Japanese scholar Kanesaburō Andō (安藤兼三郎), the latter article expressed admiration for Prőhle's command of Japanese and even reproduced one of his letters written in Japanese to demonstrate his exceptional language skills.[629]

It is likely that the Japanese were most interested in the achievements of Hungarian medical science, although there are a few early examples of Hungarian mathematical and historiographical contributions reaching Japan as well. In 1894, a German-language bacteriological work by Samuel Leopold Schenk (Schenk Samu Lipót, 1840–1902), a Hungarian embryologist at the University of Vienna, was published in Japanese translation. (Currently, there is no information available on the history of this translation or its reception in Japan.)[630] Some evidence of interest in mathematics can be found in the estate of Dairoku Kikuchi (菊池大麓, 1855–1917), a Japanese mathematician and politician who graduated from Cambridge University in England. The Institute of History at the University of Tokyo still preserves an English-language offprint of the spatial theory of Hungarian mathematician János Bolyai (1802–1860), to which Kikuchi himself wrote an introduction in 1894.[631] There is no doubt that Bolyai's theory was known in Japan at the time, although the specific impact it may have had on the development of Japanese mathematics remains unclear. It is worth noting that János

[628] 巌谷小波, 金子紫草 (著)『少年世界読本』博文館. 1907. pp. 108-111.
[629] Pesti Napló, 1906-11-14
[630] エス・エル・シェンク『黴菌学』, 神田区医学研究会, 1894. (Translated by 富岡美矢太、伊藤長彦)
[631] *The Science Absolute Of Space* In: 東京数学物理学会記事, Vol. 5., No. 3., 1894. pp. 94-135.

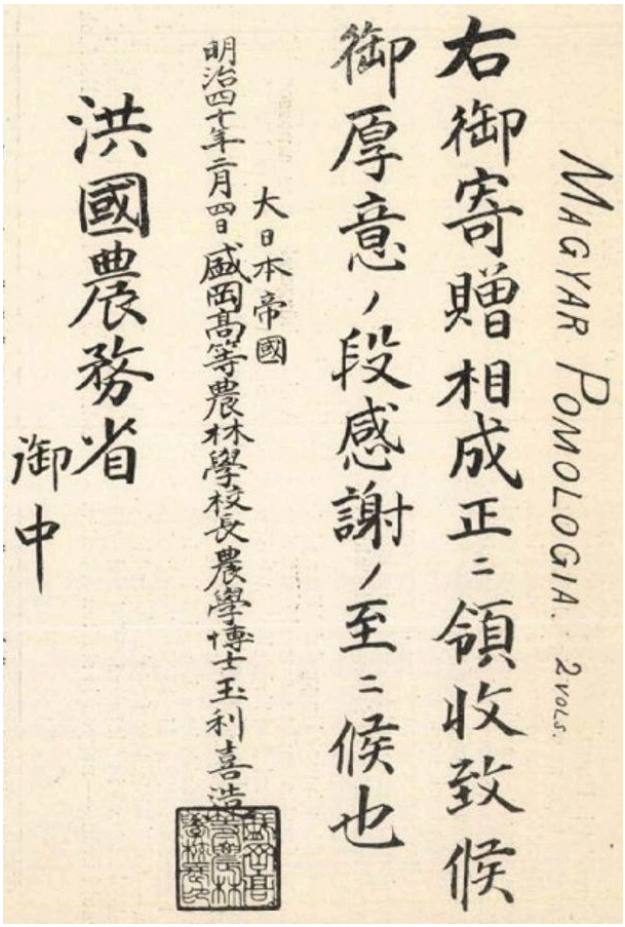
Bolyai himself expressed an interest in Japan. In his 14,000-page manuscript, he mentions that he would like to learn Japanese:

> "*Since I am already somewhat familiar with a few languages that are of more immediate interest (Hungarian, German, Latin, French, Italian, Romanian), I would like to learn other languages, in particular Chinese and Japanese.*"[632]

In the field of historiography, we can mention Gusztáv Zerffi (1820–1892), a Hungarian revolutionary-turned-historian in London, who wrote *The Science of History* at the request of Japanese scholar Kenchō Suematsu in 1879. Although the Japanese translation was never published, the book still influenced the early development of modern Japanese historiography. Lastly, there is evidence that Hungarian fruit cultivation practices found their way to Japan as well. By decree of Minister Ignác Darányi, the Ministry of Agriculture sent a lavishly illustrated two-volume work titled *Magyar Pomologia* to the Japanese government in 1907 (as was also done with the governments of other countries). The Japanese response was published in the Hungarian press in Japanese, along with the accompanying translation:

> "*The Imperial Government of Japan extends its heartfelt thanks to His Excellency the Hungarian Minister of Agriculture for the kind gift of the two volumes of the highly interesting and comprehensive 'Magyar Pomologia.'*"[633]

[632] Cited by: Szabó Péter Gábor: *Bolyai János Japánban – Matematikatörténeti tanulmány*, Source: Magyar Irodalmi Lap www.irodalmilap.net/?q=cikk/az-iro-ujsagiro-palyazat-iii-helyezettje (accessed: 2014 March, link no longer available). Translated by the Author.
[633] Vasárnapi Ujság, 1907



Japanese response of gratitude after receiving the book Magyar Pomologia from the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture (1907)

Crossing Paths Outside of Hungary and Japan

A Hungarian linguist, Gábor Bálint Szentkatolnay, described two early encounters with Japanese people. The first occurred in 1872 in Saint Petersburg, where he met Japanese men sent by the Japanese government to study in Europe. He encountered them after spending about ten months among Western Mongols. The second encounter took place in 1878 in Shanghai, where he met Japanese women. These women were living or working in China, apparently due to economic hardship in Japan. Bálint notes that they worked in European households or jointly ran tea houses and small restaurants in Chinese coastal cities.[634]

[634] Bálint Gábor: *Minő fajúak a japánok (nipponiak)?* In: Erdélyi Múzeum, 1894. XI. kötet, IX. füzet, pp. 583-591.

Violinist Ede Reményi was performing in London in 1877 when he met the Japanese envoy, who asked him to compose a battle march. Reményi requested two Japanese folk songs, upon which His Excellency played one on the piano while a member of the embassy sang the other. This was enough for Reményi, and 24 hours later he had composed a *'delightful march*'. He allegedly received remuneration for the march.[635]

Gusztáv Zerffi (George Gustavus Zerffi, 1820–1892) was a journalist, historian, and Hungarian captain in the 1848 War of Independence who later became an Austrian spy. In the latter half of his life, he served as president of the Royal Historical Society and became a well-known, though not necessarily widely recognized, historian in London, where he obtained British citizenship in 1862. It was there that he met Kenchō Suematsu (末松謙澄 1855–1920), who worked for the Japanese Historical Office[636] and was studying in England. On March 6, 1879, Suematsu asked him to survey European historiographical traditions, identify models of ideal historians, and write a handbook on European historiography for Japanese historians. The book was published in the same year under the title *The Science of History*, and a Japanese translation was even completed in manuscript form (now preserved at the Institute of Historiography at the University of Tokyo).[637] However, it was never published in Japanese because its contents were soon overtaken by new developments in historical scholarship.[638] (Zerffi produced about 150 pages, but his focus on the philosophy of history and ancient Greek authors, rather than modern European standards, limited the survey's impact on later debates.)[639] Nevertheless, Zerffi's work can be said to have indirectly contributed to the birth of modern Japanese historiography, as historian-translators themselves drew on and quoted from the book.[640]

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[635] Magyar Polgár, 1877-07-17 / 161. szám

[636] 修史館 The office was responsible for compiling Japanese history books.

[637] For other manuscripts found in the meantime, see: 大久保利謙「ゼルフィーの「史学」と岩倉具視」In:『大久保利謙歴史著作集7』, 東京, 1988., pp. 322-329.

[638] 鈴木利章「文明史・G・G・ゼルフィとT・B・麻侯礼卿―その前史―」In:『ヴィクトリア朝英国と東アジア』京都、思文閣出版, 2006. pp. 234-257.

[639] Michael Facius: *A Rankean Moment in Japan: The Persona of the Historian and the Globalization of the Discipline, c.1900*. In: Modern Intellectual History, p. 8. https://doi.org/10.1017/ S1479244320000335

[640] For example, Shosaku Saga compiled his own work while translating Zerffi's book., lsd.: 嵯峨正作『日本史綱』, 1889, 嵩山房, Tokyo; Saga's book later became part of the official curriculum in Japanese high schools.

The Japanese writer and politician Sanshi Tōkai, whose real name was Shirō Shiba, was sent to Philadelphia, U.S., to study in 1882. After his return in 1886, he was appointed secretary of the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture. Later that year, he embarked on a year-long tour of Europe with representatives of the ministry and, separating from the delegation, paid a visit to Lajos Kossuth personally in Turin, Italy.[641] The writer may have learned about Kossuth during his studies in America and was evidently eager to meet him. This is demonstrated by a letter in English addressed to Kossuth and dated March 30, 1887. The letter was accompanied by a business card inscribed: "*S. Shiba, Secrétaire Particulier du Ministre de l'Agriculture et du Commerce du Japon*".

"*Dear Sir,*

Please permit me to take the liberty to write to you. Though I do not know you Sir, but I am so much acquainted with your great name. I am Japanese young man and I have the books for curiosity. I will be very happy indeed.

With best compliments and praying thy long life.

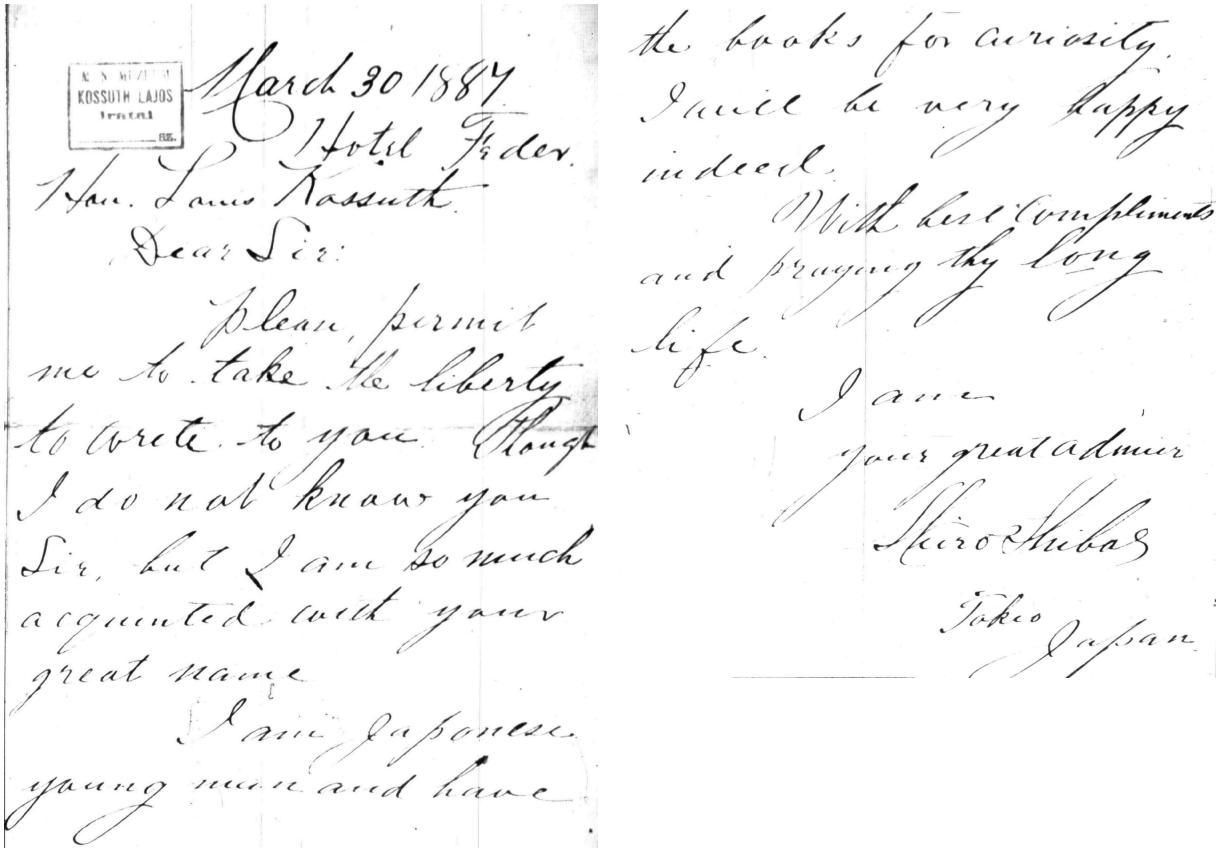
I am your great admirer

Shiro Shiba

Tokio

Japan"

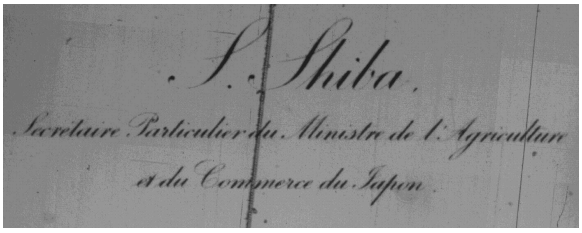
[641] 東海散士『佳人之奇遇』七編（巻十三・十四）, 1897. ; For details of the meeting and discussion, see.: 鈴木栄樹「駐伊公使時代の田中不二麿と訪伊日本人たち : 明治中期における日本人政治家のイタリア<観光>」In:『立命館言語文化研究』20(2), 立命館大学, 2008., pp. 20-21.



Letter from Shirō Shiba to Lajos Kossuth, March 30, 1887. (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár)

The cover letter was followed by several additional pages, though unfortunately only a fragment survives. From this fragment we learn that Shiba had written a popular political novel in Japanese titled *Great Encounters with Unfortunate Patriots*, of which six volumes had been published by 1886, the last dealing with the Polish patriot Kościuszko and others. Shiba informs Kossuth that the next volume will be published soon and that it will focus on Kossuth's career, General József Bem, and other figures. Although Shiba notes that he does not expect Kossuth to know Japanese, he nevertheless wishes to present the book to him as a gift.[642]

[642] Magyar Országos Levéltár Kossuth Gyűjtemény, R90 I 6678 a, b.



Shiba's Business card sent to Kossuth (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár)

Hungarian politician Kuno Klebelsberg (1875–1932), later Minister of Public Education and architect of Hungary's scholarship system in the 1920s and 1930s, took note of Japanese scholarship students during the 1890s while visiting foreign universities such as Berlin. From these encounters, he concluded that Japan's rapid development was largely the result of substantial investment in higher education.

The pioneer of Japanese dermatology, Keizō Doi/Dohi (土肥慶蔵 1866–1932), studied under the renowned Hungarian dermatologist Mór Kaposi at the University of Vienna between 1894 and 1896. The rare books Doi inherited from Kaposi illuminate the professional relationship between the two scholars.[643] Doi may have been the first Japanese scholarship student to study under a Hungarian professor, although it is not known whether he ever traveled to Hungary.[644]

Károly Kaán's short study on Japanese forestry, published in *Erdészeti Lapok (Forestry Journal)* in 1900, reveals that during his study trip abroad, he met Masatada Ezaki (江崎政忠 1865–?), the Japanese imperial court forestry advisor, who was studying German forestry in Gmunden, the headquarters of the Salzkammergut State Forestry Administration.[645] Kaán wrote exclusively positive things about Ezaki, describing him as a European-educated professional with outstanding expertise and excellent personal qualities, whose pleasant company he enjoyed on several occasions. When Ezaki departed, he gave Kaán some Japanese tree seeds and a picture album illustrating

[643] Yasuda T., Nagatoya Y.: *The History of Dermatology in Japan*. Brochure edited and distributed on occasion of the International Congress of Dermatology in Tokyo, 1982.
[644] Source: dspace.lib.kanazawa-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2297/27291/3/AA11463232-6-9.pdf.txt (accessed: 2013 May; link no longer available); See also: Karl Holubar and Stella Fatović-Ferenčić: *Austria and Japan: Early Relations in Dermatology – An Imperial Connection in Historical Perspective*; The Journal of Dermatology, VOL 28. 2001., pp. 671-681.
[645] Kaán Károly: *Képek Japán erdőgazdaságából*. In.: Erdészeti Lapok, 1900. 39. évf. 9. füzet, pp. 805-818.

Japanese forestry, which Kaán references in his article. The drawings in the album provide insight into Japanese forest management and material transport practices.

Endre Ady, a Hungarian poet and journalist, encountered Japanese people in Paris. On Christmas Eve 1905, Ady and a Japanese friend made a visit to a Buddhist temple in the city. In his article *Buddha temploma vár (Buddha's Temple Awaits)*, he mentions "*Bayashi, my little yellow Japanese student*" about whom no further information is available.[646]

Menyhért Lengyel, a Hungarian playwright, screenwriter, and novelist best known for the play Typhoon (1909), which became internationally successful and helped establish his reputation outside Hungary, met Japanese people in Berlin right after one of the performances of Typhoon on stage. Although this should perhaps be taken with a pinch of salt, if we assume that it happened and that this story is not part of his literary creations, it was a friendly experience. As the story goes, on February 27, 1910, Lengyel was invited by the attaché of the Japanese Imperial Embassy in Berlin to lunch at a guesthouse called "Matsushita", located at Kalkreuterstrasse 14. The invitation came after the entire staff of the Japanese Embassy in Berlin had attended a performance of Taifun the previous day.

> "*No sign outside, no inscription – this place is clearly not meant for strangers – but up on the first floor, a small black sign with gold lettering reads: Matzushita. We ring the bell. A pretty German maid answers: 'The count is already waiting for you,' – she says, and leads us into the dining room, where eight to ten Japanese gentlemen are seated around the table. I already know some of them from last night; I'm introduced to the rest, though of course it's impossible to remember their names on first hearing. We sit down and look at one another with smiles (...) from the very first moment, I feel at home here, like a relative, a friend who can speak freely about anything with people of a similar temperament. Where does this come from? Perhaps from my earlier acquaintances with the Japanese, perhaps because I've spent so much time with them and know so much about them – or perhaps there's another reason: some subterranean, unconscious connection, a mysterious instinct and sign that we share a common ancestry –*

[646] Ady Endre: *Buddha temploma vár*. In: Budapesti Napló, 1905. szeptember 24.

who knows? (...) The initial themes of our conversation do indeed revolve around the question of kinship. Count Mushakoji already knows something about this – an acquaintance of his, Professor Siratori, spent a long time in Budapest, learned Hungarian, and upon returning to Japan, wrote interesting things about the similarities between the two languages and the two peoples. (...) 'Take a good look at us, sir', – says Mushakoji with a smile, 'we're not as ugly as they make us out to be on stage; please tell the actors to make the Japanese look a little more attractive – that was the only thing that annoyed me a little during the pleasant evening' (...) Then comes a heavy cigarette smoking session, and the conversation continues. Some of the Japanese gentlemen are exceptionally well-educated and remarkably well-informed. (...) Count Mushakoji readily undertakes to translate Taifun and stage it in Tokyo. Of course, it is impossible to know how much of his words are mere politeness, but he assures me that they all liked the play very much, found it essentially true to life, and believe that the Japanese spirit is portrayed very favorably in it. (...) And they probe as to what kind of mission I had in mind and understood during Dr. Tokeramo's assignment. Political? Military? That they have no secret missions whatsoever; on the contrary, they conduct their affairs very openly – they simply want to learn, that's all. To learn a great deal. And that's simply not dangerous. At that point, I bring up the fact that two years ago, a Japanese prince came to Berlin with a large entourage, who was also very interested in everything, particularly highlighting the factories and power plants with his curious visits. At the time, this was a great honor for the factories, and there was always an amateur photographer in the prince's entourage who took pictures of him there on the factory premises. But amazingly, the prince would always position himself in front of a new type of engine or device during these visits, so that the photographs captured not only the prince's figure but also a clear view of the machinery. Afterward, the Japanese gentlemen returned to Tokyo, perfected the machines, and dismissed the German engineers. Since then, the German factories have been grateful for the honorary visits but have no further interest in them. The Japanese smile, but assure us that they are not cunning, just practical. (...) Before leaving, they

express their wish that the Japanese and Hungarian communities in Berlin stay united. They offer us the use of their club, where we are welcome. The farewell is extremely friendly."[647]

A completely different tone is set in one of the articles of the Hungarian journalist Sándor Simonyi, who visited the Japanese Embassy and the Nippon Club in Berlin in 1912, after the death of Emperor Meiji, and wrote about the Japanese in a highly dismissive and clearly racist tone.

"Finally, Mr. Shigemitsu, the attaché at the Japanese embassy, arrives. He is a man with an intelligent face, and his reserved, deliberate, unhurried speech makes it clear that he has mastered the art of diplomacy – the art of saying nothing – to perfection. He is still a young man, and as we stand facing each other, I immediately sense that particular interviewer's superiority that always takes hold of me whenever I am confronted by someone who does not possess the very highest intellectual capacities. (...) She nodded his head, saying yes, they were deeply mourning Mutsuhito, whom she had even begun to worship and for whose spirit she would set up an altar in her home; she was just waiting for His Majesty to be enshrined as a god in Tokyo. 'Madam,' I asked, 'have you heard that, according to many, there is only one God who, for better or worse, has held office for a very long time, and that this position is unlikely to become vacant in the near future?' The Japanese woman smiled at me with astonishing bewilderment. The daughter of Nippon did not understand the higher mental function of irony. (...) I drove to the Nippon Club located at An der Apostelkirche 8. Signs in Japanese and German mark the clubhouse for Japanese residents in Berlin. There are four or five large rooms in total. (...) Furthermore, everywhere – in every room – there is some inexplicable exotic odor, which I dare to call a 'scent' only with exaggerated optimism. According to experts, this specific Japanese odor comes from a certain food, some kind of Asian condiment, of which I was only able to detect the smell. Life in this peculiar club is extremely interesting. Everyone talks in whispers, without a sound, and they smile and bow

[647] Az Ujság, 1910-03-02. Translated by the Author.

to one another more than anywhere else in the world. Some sit on low chairs, buried in stacks of Japanese newspapers. The waitstaff here are German as well, and the Japanese gentlemen give orders with no small amount of arrogance. I speak to the secretary first. I tell him that I'd like to speak with someone among them who speaks German well and is familiar with Japanese affairs. "Let me introduce you to Mr. Kirika Rakaza, Doctor of Philosophy!" – said the little secretary with such delightful refinement and deep reverence that one felt a sense of pleasure in his words. The Doctor of Philosophy also introduced himself, and once again, all I could make out was "Dr. Kirika Rakaza". That surely isn't his real name, but he hadn't had his business cards printed yet, so his delightfully crunchy name can only be rendered with approximate accuracy."[648]

At Journey's End: Hungarians in the Yokohama Foreign Cemetery

The establishment of burial grounds for foreigners was an important aspect of treaty port negotiations in nineteenth-century Japan. The 1854 treaty with the United States included a clause guaranteeing a protected burial site for American citizens, reflecting awareness of Japan's earlier resistance to foreign burials and the dangers of seafaring at the time. During Perry's visit to Japan, a 24-year-old American sailor Robert Williams of the ship Mississippi drowned. Perry requested a cemetery for Americans, and the Shogunate provided part of Zōtoku-in (増徳院) Temple's grounds in Yokohama, offering a site with an ocean view. Williams was initially buried there, marking the beginning of the Yokohama Yamate Foreign Cemetery. Later, his remains were moved to Gyokusenji (玉泉寺) Temple in Shimoda, where other sailors from Perry's expedition are also buried. Additionally, two Russian officers, killed by anti-foreigner samurai in 1859, were buried near Zōtoku-in Temple, creating the first plots loaned to foreign countries. Later, in 1870, the Meiji government introduced detailed procedures for handling deaths. At that time, the bodies of foreigners who died during their stay were to be handed over to their respective consuls and buried in foreign cemeteries established

[648] Pesti Hírlap, 1912-08-04. Translated by the Author.

and maintained on land provided by local officials – demonstrating the government's respect and care for foreigners during an era when death from illness was common.[649]

Some Hungarians also ended their life in Japan. The Yokohama Foreign Cemetery is the final resting place of many foreign individuals who played pivotal roles in Japan's modernization during the Meiji era. Although this section focuses solely on this particular cemetery, it is possible that more Hungarians were buried elsewhere on Japanese soil during this period. The author of this book made several trips to the cemetery between 2007 and 2009 and had the opportunity to examine the tombs. Three Hungarian individuals from the 1868–1913 period have graves there: Antal Elked, a banker who died in 1942; György/George Komor who died in 1976; and a certain F. S. *Tachimek*, who died in 1869. He may be identifiable with Ferenc *Jachimek* Jr. (b. 1830) and may have been a sailor on the first East Asian expedition of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, as a 1870 report in Vasárnapi Újság[650] suggests that Ferenc Jachimek reportedly became a victim of a shipwreck en route from China to Japan. Elked's tomb is located in section 5-A, Komor's in section 7-C, and *Jachimek/Tachimek*'s in section 11 of the cemetery.[651]

[649] Darren Swanson: *A Place for the Dead – the Foreign Cemeteries of Kobe and Osaka 1867 – to the Present Day*. 2010. pp. 2-3.
[650] Vasárnapi Újság, 1870., p. 238.
[651] https://meiji-portraits.de/meiji_portraits_e.html#20090527093236187_1_2_3_45_1; https://meiji-portraits.de/meiji_portraits_k.html#KOMORGeorge; https://bacsa.ourarchives.online/bin/aps_detail.php?id=621669 (accessed: 2025 Oct.)

Chapter Five: Relations in Culture, Literature, and Art

Foundations of Knowledge on Japan and Hungary – From Commerce to Art: Japan Steps Into the Spotlight – The Vienna World's Fair (Weltausstellung) of 1873: Processes and Contexts of Planning, Execution, and Impact – Japoniserie and Japonisme in the West and in the Kingdom of Hungary – Japonism(e) vs. Commercial Japan-Fever: Toward a Nuanced Understanding – Japan on Display in the Kingdom of Hungary – Collecting Japan in Hungary – The Influence of Japonism(e) on Hungarian Painting and Graphic Arts – Early Agoras of Commercial Japan-Fever in the Kingdom of Hungary – Japan-Fever in Hungarian Literature, Urban Legends, Music, Theatre and Film: From Pages to Stages – Hungarian Silent Films in Japan – Japan-Related Themes in Hungarian Architecture – Japan Fever, But Not Always for Profit: Balls for a Cause – Beyond Observation: A History of Japanese Language Teaching and Learning in Hungary – Japonisme and Japan-Fever in Hungary: Ideological Retrospect and 21st-Century Misreadings by State-Aligned Scholars

Foundations of Knowledge on Japan and Hungary

To begin, let us briefly review the earliest sources on Hungary and Japan, along with the etymology of Hungary's Japanese name and certain Japan-related words in Hungarian. The earliest known Japanese description of Hungary dates back to 1714.[652] The book, which presents the traditional costumes of 42 countries – including those of the "Hungarians" – contains only a single sentence about the country.:

> „*Onkaria is also called Unkari. This country is located in Europe. It is very rich in crops, and many cattle and sheep are raised there. It is an extremely cold country.*"[653]

[652] 四十二国人物図説, 1714.

[653] The original Japanese text (transcription and Hungarian translation by András Albeker):「翁加里亜ハウンカリートモ云此国欧羅巴ノ内ニ在テ産物甚多豊饒ニテ牛羊殊二繁殖スト云最モ寒國也」

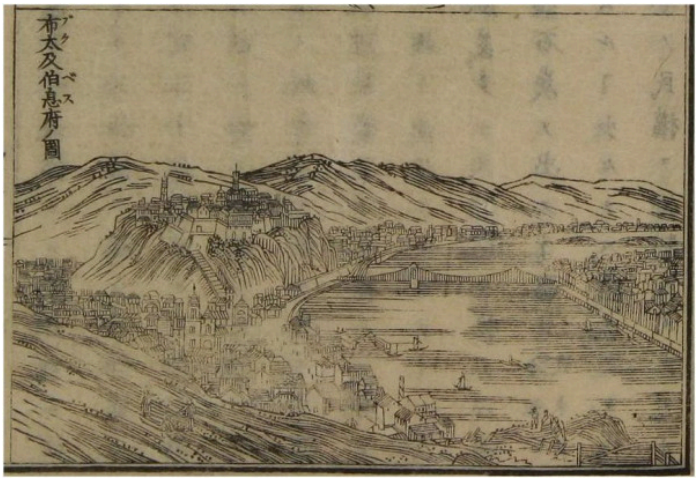
四十二国人物図説, 1714.
Image and text about the Hungarians

Latin-language printed materials about Japan had already reached Hungary much earlier. András Dudith's private library contained a collection of missionary letters dating from 1563; a description of Japan appeared in the inventory of Márton Czobor's estate in 1618; and in 1628, several volumes on Japan were listed in the catalogs of Pannonhalma Abbey and the Jesuit monastery in Pozsony (Bratislava).[654] Among the publications introducing Japan in Hungarian, the first was János Csere Apáczai's[655] *Magyar Encyclopaedia (Hungarian Encyclopedia)*, published in 1655. It referred to the country as "Japan" and offered only a few fragments of geographical information, such as noting that Japan is located among the larger islands of Asia. Later, the encyclopedia entitled *Újabb kori ismeretek tára (Encyclopedia of Modern Knowledge)*, published between 1850 and 1855, contained several articles on Japan, including one in the fourth

[654] András Dudith: bishop, diplomat, and humanist scholar (1533–1589); Márton Czobor: nobleman, ban, and diplomat (dates uncertain); Buda Attila (szerk.): *Messziről felmerülő, vonzó szigetek I.* – Japánról szóló magyar nyelvű ismertetések a kezdetektől 1869-ig. Ráció Kiadó, Budapest, 2010. p. 17.
[655] János Apáczai Csere (1625–1659): scholar, educator, philosopher, and Reformed theologian

volume by Julius Heinrich Klaproth on the Japanese language and literature; this was the first summary to present the state of contemporary knowledge on the subject.

Following the above, let us examine the etymology of Hungary's Japanese name. On a Japanese map from 1623,[656] Hungary was marked with the following kanji: 翁加里亜 (Onkaria).[657] Occasionally, documents from later periods also use these characters to write Hungary. Kanji transcription was even applied to Hungarian city names, as evidenced by a Japanese source published in 1880, which includes a depiction of *Buda* and *Pest*.[658] The name *Buda* opens the door to some remarkably imaginative and amusing historical speculations: in the late medieval period, the Italian humanist Galeotto Marzio proposed that it derived from *Buddha*, not because the Enlightened One had founded the city, but because his renown was believed to be great enough for the castle to bear his name.[659]



View of Buda and Pest, 1880.

[656]『職方外紀』; For details on the development of Japanese cartography, see:『鎖国時代日本人の海外知識』、昭和28年、開国百年記念文化事業会

[657] The 1979 edition of the『宛字外来語辞典』published by the 宛字外来語辞典編集委員会, provides the following readings for the kanji composition on page 220.: „onkariya, honkaria, hongaria"; or ヲンカリヤ、ホンカリア、ホンガリア

[658]『輿地誌略』明治十二年,「布太(ブダ)及伯息(ペスト)府ノ圖」(Thanks to András Albeker for the photo)

[659] Galeotto Marzio: *Mátyás Királynak Kiváló, Bölcs, Tréfás Mondásairól És Tetteiről Szóló Könyv (Book about the great, wise, humorous sayings and deeds of King Mátyás;* the original Latin title: *De egregie, sapienter et iocose dictis ac factis Mathiae regis)* Budapest, Magyar Helikon, 1979. p. 46. (The book was written around 1485 and first printed in 1563.) Translated by Attila Király. Some nationalist or "ancient-origin" texts (or blogs) still insist on a profoundly spiritual connection, bestowing Hungary's capital with an unexpectedly 'exotic' pedigree; however, this theory belongs more to the realm of legend, speculative history, and mystical imagination than to any actual historical or linguistic evidence.

To illustrate the variations of Hungary as a country name in common use in Japan at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, I compiled a table using the digital database of the National Diet Library of Japan, which provides access to digitized Japanese books from the Meiji period.[660] The documents include a mixture of studies and textbooks on geography, politics, education, economics, agriculture, and regional studies, with most focusing on the social sciences, history, and industry. The search results are summarized in a table to give a general idea of how the name of Hungary evolved during the Meiji (1868–1912) and Taisho (1912–1926) periods. (The table is by no means complete, as the database is constantly expanding, so future searches may yield slightly different results.)[661]

Names and spellings found in the digital archive of the National Diet Library of Japan

Name	Year of first occurrence in the archive	Note	Year of last occurrence in the archive
匈牙利(hangari)	**before 1869**[662]	193 hits	1926.
ヲンカリヤ(onkariya)	**1873**[663]	1 hit	1873.
匈加利(hangari)	**1883**[664]	6 hits	1904.
ホンガリー(hongarī)	**1884**[665]	3 hits	1921.
洪牙利(hangari)	**1898**[666]	61 hits	outdated but still used version
翁加里亜 (onkariya)	**1898**[667]	1 hit	1898.
ハンガリー(hangarī)	**1899**[668]	30 hits	current version
ホンガリア(hongaria)	**1903**[669]	17 hits	1921.
ハンガリア(hangaria)	**1911**[670]	7 hits	1926.
ハンガリヤ (hangariya)	**1918**[671]	5 hits	1926.

n.a.: ヲンカリア、ヲンガリヤ、ヲンガリア

It can be seen that in the contemporary documents in the archive, the name 翁加里亜 (Onkariya), which was frequently used in the 17th and 18th centuries, had completely disappeared from public use by the end of the 19th century, giving way to several

[660] 国立国会図書館、近代デジタルライブラリー https://dl.ndl.go.jp/
[661] Note: I conducted the search in August 2013.
[662] 萬國地理, In.: 大日本中學會卅二年度第一学級講義録 (大日本中學會) year of publication unknown; or: 最近時政治史, In.: 早稲田大學卅六年度史學科第一學年講義録 (早稲田大學出版部) year of publication unknown
[663] 宇宙問答両童智恵くらべ
[664] 欧米各国代議法鑑
[665] 万国蚕業彙聞
[666] 鵬程日誌
[667] 四十二国人物図説 (a reprint of the book mentioned above, published in 1714)
[668] 中等新撰地理
[669] 最新外国地理学科書
[670] 英語演説法
[671] 外国の名勝, In.: 科外教育叢書 ; 第51 (科外教育叢書刊行会)

alternative transcriptions.[672] In addition, other variants were used during the Meiji period in Japan, as unearthed by the Hungarian linguist András Albeker: two katakana forms: ウンガルン[673] (Ungarun, 1866) and オングリー[674] (Ongurī, 1892); and four kanji forms: 翁加里亞[675] (1854), and 恒加利, 翁給里亜, 班那里阿[676] (all attested in 1872). Obviously, the early Japanese kanji forms were derived from various Chinese transcriptions, whose use can be traced back to the Yuan and Ming dynasties (thirteenth to seventeenth centuries), including Mazha 馬剳, Mazha'er 馬剳兒 for the "Magyars", and Hanyali 寒牙里, Wenggeili(ya) 翁给里(亚), Weng'aliya 翁阿利亚, and lastly, Xiongjiali 匈加利 or Xiongyali 匈牙利 for Hungary.[677] On the Japanese side, the Magyars were referred to as 馬札児[678] or 馬扎児.[679]

On the Hungarian side, early manuscripts and printed materials suggest that the first known forms of *Japan* in Hungarian were quite diverse. The form "*Japonika"*, which originated via German mediation, appears as early as 1694,[680] although later sources from the mid-18th century already show the variants "*jápon"* and "*japón"* referring to the Japanese. The first appearance of the country's name in Hungarian as the proper noun *Nippon* can be traced to 1750,[681] although in the 18th century Japan was more commonly referred to as "*Jápónia / Japónia / Japonia"*, or "*Jáponica"*. The first Japan-related European-mediated loanword to enter Hungarian is "*bonc"*, via Portuguese *"bonzo"*, which European missionaries used to refer to Japanese Buddhist monks (bōzu or 坊主). It appeared in 1757 in the forms "*bonzi"* or "*bonzius"*.[682]

In the early years of the Dual Monarchy, János Hunfalvy, the founder of modern Hungarian geography, wrote several general introductory articles on Japan, titled *Japán*

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[672] Three kanji were primarily used to transcribe the syllable "han" from the word Hangarī in Japanese newspapers during the Meiji and Taisho periods: 匈, 洪, and 匂. The third character is a miswritten version of the first. See: 山本彩加『近代日本語における外国地名の漢字表記』—明治・大正期の新聞を資料として— In: 千葉大学日本文化叢(10), 2009., p. 96.
[673] 墺地利帝国憲法, 1866 https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/i14/i14_a4465/index.html (accessed: 2026 June)
[674] 荘司鋹四郎『速記法講話筆記』1892
[675] 三語便覧, 1854
[676] 村田文夫編纂 『音譯筌』明治5年
[677] Li Aoran: *Magyarország országnevének kínai fordításai – kronológiai áttekintés az ókortól napjainkig.* In: Távol-keleti Tanulmányok 17/2 (2025), pp. 47–63.
[678] 坂本健一(編)『増訂外国地名人名辞典』1903. 宝文官,『標準漢訳外国人名地名表』1914, 商務印書館
[679] 有澤 玲『宛字書きかた辞典』柏書房株式会社 2000
[680] Szabó T. Attila (szerk.): *Erdélyi magyar szótörténeti tár*, Budapest-Bukarest, 1993, 5. kötet, p. 885.
[681] Lenglet du Fresnoy – Gyalakuti Lázár János: *Az ásiai szigetekről*, 1750.
[682] Vetsei P. István: *Jápónia és Ásiának végső földei*, 1757.

földjéről és népéről (On the Land and People of Japan), *Japán földművelési, ipari és tudományos viszonyairól (On Japan's Agricultural, Industrial, and Scientific Conditions)*, and *Japán és népe (Japan and Its People)*.[683] He drew on the latest European – mainly German and French – scholarship for these articles, thereby providing the Hungarian intelligentsia of the time with information about Japan.

From Commerce to Art: Japan Steps Into the Spotlight

Thanks to the popularity of world exhibitions (considered 'pilgrimage sites of commodity fetishism')[684] at the end of the 19th century, both artistic and public interest increasingly turned toward Japan. When the first Great Exhibition was held in London in 1851, its aim was to present the global situation according to hierarchical criteria of chronological, geographical, and civilizational development. As Prince Albert put it, the London Great Exhibition represented, in miniature, the world as seen from a European perspective: "*a living portrait of the point of development to which mankind has arrived*".[685] The exhibition conveyed a clear message: England had reached the pinnacle of world development, ahead of the rest of Europe and America. Its message to 'underdeveloped' countries was that free trade, parliamentary monarchy, and the Anglican Church were the keys to progress and success. At the time, nations deemed 'uncivilized' were still viewed primarily as suppliers of raw materials and handicrafts to satisfy the growing demands of more developed economies.[686] Japan did not officially participate in the 1851 London exhibition (although some Japanese artifacts appeared among the Chinese exhibits), as it was held before the country opened to Western trade. Japan was also absent from the 1855 Paris World's Fair, but by the end of the 19th century it began taking part in the major world exhibitions. This presence was important for Japan's efforts to learn from the outside world. Participation in the exhibitions gave Japanese representatives access to the latest information of the time,

[683] Magyar Tudomány, II/3 - 1869. pp. 3-4; 9-10., Budapesti Szemle. Uj folyam XIII. köt. Pest, 1869. pp. 174-204, 277-322.
[684] Walter Benjamin: *Paris – Capital of the Nineteenth Century.* 1935., p. 81.
[685] Ellen P. Conant: *Refractions of the Rising Sun – Japan's participation in international exhibitions 1862-1910*. In: Japan and Britain – An Aesthetic Dialogue 1850-1930. London, 1991.
[686] Christopher Howe: *The Origins of Japanese Trade Supremacy*. 1996., Chicago, p. 109.

which they could then apply to their own industrial, technological, and military development. At the same time, the exhibitions allowed Japan to present itself to the outside world and to the Western powers, promote its exports, and improve its foreign trade balance. Japan hoped to enhance its prestige in the West and thereby facilitate the renegotiation of the unequal treaties imposed by the great powers. It is remarkable, therefore, how effectively Japan used international exhibitions to its own advantage – although Western perceptions of Japan and the involvement of Western advisors in the project also played significant roles. The West was impressed by the fact that Japan appeared far more receptive and "eager to learn" in its interactions with Western countries than China. Meiji leaders constructed a national history by inventing and emphasizing a distinct indigenous cultural tradition to appeal to Western audiences. Three pillars were used to demonstrate that Japan was a 'civilized' country: military strength, industrial independence, and artistic and cultural enlightenment. Art and education became central to Japan's national ideology, embodied in the slogan "*fukoku bijutsu*" (富国美術: "build a rich country through art"), aiming to create a shared vision of a productive society. In the first two decades of the Meiji regime, "art" functioned largely as a vehicle for introducing policies that promoted industry and commerce. Atsushi Udono points out that no concept yet existed to distinguish applied arts supporting export industries from fine arts representing the essence of Japanese culture, and Japanese art as such was not considered a symbol of national spirit.[687] In the 1870s, Japanese art was not viewed as part of national identity; only after the creation of the term 国粋 (kokusui, "national essence") did a conceptual framework emerge that allowed Japanese art to be consciously understood as part of Japan's identity, beginning around the early 1890s.

In 1879, Count Ágost Zichy wrote about the Japanese in his *Tanulmány a japáni művészetről (Study on Japanese Art)*:

> "*The only people in all of Asia who are striving, on their own initiative, to approach Western culture*".[688]

[687] 鵜殿篤: 明治IO年代の美術における国粋主義の検討. pp. 53-54. https://meganeculture.boo.jp/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/article2013.pdf (accessed: 2025 Dec)
[688] Zichy Ágost: *Tanulmány a japáni művészetről*, MTA Értekezések a nyelv- és széptudományok köréből, 1879. Translated by the author.

Another article published in 1904 states:

> "*However, the prestige of a foreign people immediately increases as soon as it inclines toward European customs. We consider such people to be 'talented people receptive to culture'. This is why the Japanese are praised, and why so many bad jokes are made about the Chinese*".[689]

Of course, many people held different views about Japan's contact with the West. From 1868 onward, Japan appeared to adopt Western customs almost uncritically for nearly two decades. In this context, Jacob Falke described the Japanese at the 1873 World's Fair in Vienna as "*our Europeanized Japanese in top hats and tailcoats*".[690] Japan was constantly contrasted with China, and Westerners developed a romantic, fairy-tale image of it. This perception was largely shaped by European travelers, merchants, diplomats, and military personnel, who had been visiting Japan since the late 1850s and who generally regarded Japan more favorably than China at the time. Hungarian poet Endre Ady described the Japanese influence sweeping across Europe in his column *Mit mond egy kicsi japán (What a Little Japanese Says)*, published in the *Budapesti Napló* newspaper on August 3, 1904:

> "*I tell you, we are miserable and decrepit. That is why our soul has turned to the little Japanese. We are sick of ourselves. We are tired of this soulless, feverish, useless, deceitful life, which does not have many variations in any corner of our old piece of land, because Paris is already a little like Constantinople, Moscow is sometimes almost like Barcelona, and Christiania sometimes resembles Naples. We all love the little Japanese man. Oh, how even the French would like to love him inside. He doesn't like us very much, and he has his reasons. We wouldn't have many reasons to love him either. But when we've come to hate ourselves so much. And then this strange little man comes to us from the distant land of chrysanthemums. We like this little fool. He is so peculiar, so smile-worthy, but we already sense in him the disturber of our old world. Then the little Japanese man goes home. He takes our clothes, our letters, our guns, and whatnot. He takes away even the little beauty that our famous, millennial struggle has brought*

[689] Vasárnapi Újság, 1904 március. *Japánokról általában*. Source: Huszadik század internetes archívuma. http://www.huszadikszazad.hu Translated by the author.
[690] J. Falke: *Kunstindustrie auf der Wiener Weltausstellung*. 1873.

to bloom here and there. And the little Japanese man does everything again, better, back home. We marvel and smile even more. Meanwhile, we notice that the little Japanese man sees the lines of the great universe more beautifully and better with his slanted eyes. He grasps that dubious gift, which Hamlet pondered in vain, more wisely, more courageously, and more beautifully than we do. And we begin to worship, first in paper, porcelain, and clothing. Later, in other things as well. Then it is enough for the little gray ship captain to catch a glimpse of Japan, and a magnificent flower garden springs from his dull, gray soul. Loti conquered the world and the French Academy because he let the Japanese man into his soul. Even then, we suspect that where the sun rises and the rain of peach blossoms teaches the geisha to laugh, kiss, and forget, there lives a world that laughs at and hates ours. And we can no longer smile. New news is coming. Beauties are coming. And our amazement grows, and we love the little Japanese man more and more. Because he is so strange, so devilish, so foolish, so philosophical, so fearful. Oh, how he'll tear us apart! And when the bloody Muscovite heads roll toward us, our poor, sick selves tremble with delight. Oh, what the little fool knows! I tell you, our Japanese love is our self-hatred…"[691]

When Japan 'opened up' to the West, initial relations were established through trade in modern technology and Japanese artworks and handicrafts. In response to Western interest, it was obvious for Japan to promote primarily Japanese handicrafts at world exhibitions, where, as expected, Japanese items were a resounding success. The sale of items made from domestic raw materials by local craftsmen proved to be a good business. They were in high demand because of their relative cheapness, and on the other hand, large-scale industrial production was becoming dominant in developed countries at that time, so items made from special materials using traditional techniques satisfied a demand that could not be met by anything else.[692] The European public first encountered a large number of Japanese exhibits in London in 1862, which was also

[691] Translated by the author

[692] Vadas József: *A Chinoiserie*. Széplak Magazin internetes kiadás. https://web.archive.org/web/20080313142056/http://www.szeplak.hu/default.asp?file=2003/07/chinoiserie.html (accessed: 2025 Nov.)

Japan's first significant, but still unofficial, participation in a series of world exhibitions. During the 1862 World's Fair in London, there was a growing demand in Europe for European arts to learn from Japanese motifs and techniques in order to benefit contemporary Western industry and art.[693] Interest was heightened by the fact that in 1862, a delegation from the Japanese central government, the bakufu, visited Europe to begin negotiations on postponing the opening of Japanese cities and ports. The delegation attended the opening ceremony. Most of the items exhibited in London were from the collection of the first Japanese ambassador to Britain, Sir Rutherford Alcock (1809-1897) – ceramics, lacquerware, and other small items purchased in Japan. (Due to the selection criteria, the collection presented a rather one-sided view of Japan.) After the London exhibition, Japan regularly participated in the world exhibitions in Paris in 1867 and 1878 and in Vienna in 1873. From the 1862 London exhibition to the 1910 Japan-Britain exhibition, the Japanese participated in 36 of the 88 exhibitions held in various parts of the world.[694] However, participation in world exhibitions was not always positive for Japan. At the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition in London, Formosa (Taiwan, under Japanese rule at the time) was portrayed as inhabited by fierce and intractable people prior to Japanese occupation. Taiwanese aborigines, along with Ainu from Hokkaido, performed in mock villages, enacting staged displays reminiscent of earlier Western “ethnographic shows” at world expos. Some critics understandably questioned the dignity and rights of the aboriginal participants in the Japanese section of the exhibition.[695]

According to Vasárnapi Újság, Japan’s participation in the World Fairs was closely followed in Hungary in 1869:

> “*The Japanese can rightly be placed among the most hard-working nations in the world, and they are blessed with amazing talent in both industry and crafts, as well as in the finer arts. The Japanese industrial products on display at the recent*

[693] Bincsik Mónika: *Maki-e – Válogatás a Hopp Ferenc Kelet-Ázsiai Művészeti Múzeum 19. századi japán lakkgyűjteményéből* (DVD) 2007.
[694] Ellen P. Conant: *Refractions of the Rising Sun – Japan’s participation in international exhibitions 1862-1910*. In: Japan and Britain – An Aesthetic Dialogue 1850-1930. London, 1991, p. 79.
[695] Manuel Schilcher: *Japan debuts in the West: Historic World Fairs on Display.* Edited abstract from doctoral Thesis “Appropriate Japan: How Western Art prepared a Nation for War”, University of Art and Design Linz, 2019. p. 13.

World's Fair in Paris aroused general admiration and clearly demonstrated that the island empire of the East is home to a highly civilized nation. We Europeans have no reason whatsoever to take these East-Asians lightly, because they are on a par with us in many respects and have even surpassed us in some areas."[696]

Similar sentiments were expressed by the geographical writer Lajos Sámi in the same year:

"*Porcelain vessels, lacquered furniture and other objects, bronze castings, all kinds of metal goods, and especially weapons are produced so excellently in Japan that no other country in the East can compete with it in this regard, and Japanese industrial products enjoy great renown and popularity even in Europe. They are true masters of silk weaving. In the higher arts, such as sculpture, painting, gilding, silvering, and enameling, they can compete with any country in the civilized world.*"[697]

The Vienna World's Fair (Weltausstellung) of 1873: Processes and Contexts of Planning, Execution, and Impact

World exhibitions were Eurocentric spectacles that staged the world for display. They helped Europeans affirm their own cultural and spiritual identity, while the portrayal of Asia reinforced the idea of the West as the height of civilization. The 1873 World's Fair in Vienna[698] was eagerly anticipated (Vienna was the site of the fifth World's Fair). The Austrians had been planning it since the 1860s, but the political situation and the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 prevented the plan from being realized. After the economic boom that followed 1867, however, the idea resurfaced. The document authorizing the organization of the exhibition was signed by Emperor Franz Joseph in May 1870, and the event was scheduled for 1873, the 25th anniversary of his accession

[696] Vasárnapi Újság, 1869. május 9. Translated by the author.
[697] Sámi Lajos: *Képek a Távol-Keletről*, In: Tarka Világ, 1869., p. 919. Translated by the Author.
[698] See also: a German-language website created for the 140th anniversary of the World's Fair: www.wiener-weltausstellung.at (accessed: 2025 Nov.); Lukas Nickel, Nataša Vampelj Suhadolnik (eds.): *East Asian Art in the Wake of the Vienna World's Fair of 1873*. University of Ljubljana, 2024.; *Japan at the World Exhibition 1873*, Kunsthistorisches Museum: https://repository.khm.at/viewer/japan/weltausstellung/1873/ (accessed: 2026 June)

to the throne. The fair was designed to highlight the Monarchy's status as a major world power and to establish Vienna as a leading global city, surpassing Berlin as the first venue after London and Paris to host such a large-scale event. The exhibition was held in Vienna's Prater.[699] Its central building was an 84-meter-high rotunda with a diameter of 108 meters, flanked by a machine hall (Maschinenhalle), an art hall (Kunsthalle), and a music pavilion (Musikpavillon). The rotunda housed the exhibitions of Austria and Germany, while the halls to its left were occupied by countries west of Austria and those to its right by countries east of Austria, arranged in geographical order. America was located on the left side; Japan on the right.[700] The Vienna Exhibition was of paramount importance for Japan after the Meiji Restoration, as it marked the country's debut at a prestigious European event as a newly modernizing state. Japan had already decided in 1871 (the fourth year of the Meiji era) to participate in the Vienna World's Fair, and from 1872 onwards, it gradually began preparations. Japan received the official invitation in January 1872 and had only one year and three months to prepare for the Vienna exhibition. Despite the short timeframe, Japan successfully participated, by sending the largest delegation, with nearly 70 experts. To appeal to Western audiences at the 1873 Vienna World's Fair, the Japanese exhibition bureau hired German chemist Gottfried Wagener (1832–1892)[701] and a staff member at the Austrian Embassy, Heinrich von Siebold (1852–1908) to help select and present the products. They recommended displaying items as "handcrafted products" rather than "works of art" and omitting industrial products that would expose Japan's industrial underdevelopment. Consequently, the display focused on antique art, Arita ware ceramics, metalwork such as large incense burners, lacquerware, and textiles. Wagener may have been one of the first Western advisors in Japan to link Japanese art with patriotism in 1875, viewing museums and expositions as tools for fostering national pride. He emphasized the

[699] Vienna's Prater, has long been and remains a popular place for strolling, picnics, and leisure activities. The fair featured the massive Rotunde and several exhibition halls, all built on the park's expansive open fields. Although the Rotunde no longer exists, the Prater's tree-lined Hauptallee, open meadows, and the Wurstelprater amusement area remain, preserving a sense of the space where the World's Fair once took place.

[700] A map and the layout of the Japanese pavilion can be viewed on the Japanese website about the exhibition.. Source: https://web.archive.org/web/20190722212224/https://www.ndl.go.jp/site_nippon/vienna/section1/main.html (accessed: 2025 Nov.)

[701] He played an important role in developing modern Japanese ceramics. Through his work at Edogawa Pottery, he promoted advanced ceramic techniques, glazes, pigments, and underglaze painting, training many skilled potters who later influenced the industry.

preservation and promotion of Japanese art as an expression of national individuality, at a time when Japanese contemporaries did not link Japanese art to nature or history, revealing a perceptual gap between them and foreign observers. Atsushi Udono points out that although Wagener praised and sought to preserve Japanese art, his perspective was shaped by industrial and commercial policy: he valued art primarily for its market potential rather than its inherent aesthetic or cultural significance, and consistently promoted reforms to adapt Japanese products to Western markets for economic gain. From the Vienna World's Fair in 1873 to the Paris World's Fair in 1889, European figures consistently urged Japan to preserve its 'distinctiveness', reflecting a broader, international belief that crafts should express national uniqueness rather than a trend limited to Japonisme.[702] In addition to Heinrich Siebold, his brother Alexander was also employed as an advisor by the Japanese government and took part in preparations for the Vienna World's Fair. In 1870 (Meiji 3), Alexander resigned from the British Legation in Japan and entered Japanese government service as a foreign employee in the Ministry of Popular Affairs. Shortly afterward, he was sent on official missions to London and Frankfurt, where he worked on administrative and financial tasks. After returning to Japan, he was later requested by the Exposition Secretariat to assist with preparations for the Vienna Exhibition. In early 1871, Japan began organizing its participation in the Vienna World's Fair, prompted by diplomatic discussions between Austro-Hungarian and Japanese officials. Around this time, the Japanese requested that Heinrich Siebold, who was working as an interpreter at the Austrian-Hungarian legation in Japan, be employed as an official for the exhibition. Heinrich was subsequently appointed. By late 1871, Alexander also joined the exhibition effort, following his earlier government assignments and contacts made during his European travels. From this point, both brothers were simultaneously involved in Japan's preparation for the exhibition – Heinrich primarily as a translator and editor, and Alexander as a drawing clerk and advisor. (In 1874, a photograph taken in Vienna records Alexander Siebold wearing Japanese civil court dress, at a time when both brothers were present as members of the Japanese delegation working on the

[702] 鵜殿篤: 明治10年代の美術における国粋主義の検討. pp. 54-57.
https://meganeculture.boo.jp/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/article2013.pdf

exposition.) Alexander contributed to the selection of exhibits. Contemporary records note that, based in part on his suggestions, Japan's exhibition included items such as golden dolphins from Nagoya Castle, models of the Great Buddha of Kamakura and a Tokyo pagoda, as well as architectural and cultural displays including a Shinto shrine, and a Japanese garden.[703]

Before the Vienna World's Fair, government envoys traveled throughout Japan to collect items and materials for the exhibition and to establish contact with artisans.[704] A ceramics and porcelain-painting factory was established in the Asakusa district of Tokyo specifically for the World's Fair and for export production.[705] The factory was managed by the Government Office for the World Exhibition (Hakurankai Jimukyoku 博覧会事務局), which had been created prior to the Vienna World's Fair. The president of the office, Tsunetami Sano (1823–1902), who had previously participated in the 1867 Paris World's Fair, summarized the expected outcomes of the Vienna World's Fair and the necessary steps for the future in four main points.[706] The **first** point explained why the Vienna World's Fair was important to Japan, while the remaining three points addressed how the country should approach future exhibitions. The most important task in the first point was to present Japan's crops, products, and high-quality art objects in a manner worthy of the fair, emphasizing the nation's capability for superior production. In the **second** point, Sano emphasized that the exhibits of other countries, their manufacturing techniques, and Western machinery should be thoroughly studied to aid the development of domestic industry. The **third** point proposed organizing exhibitions within Japan in the future, using the experience gained in Vienna to expand the

[703] Nobukata Kutsuzawa: *About Old Photographs Related to Siebold Brandenstein-Zeppelin Archives*. In:「文明」 No.24, 2019., pp. 40-41.

[704] 西川智之『ウィーンのジャポニズム（前編）1873年ウィーン万国博覧会』p. 180.

[705] Since Tokyo lacked local sources of pottery clay, the factory used pre-fired ceramic bodies from traditional pottery centers such as Seto and Kyoto, focusing primarily on decorative painting depicting Japanese flowers, birds, landscapes, and figures. The factory was dissolved after the fair. As a result, Tokyo became a center for innovative ceramic production, attracting potters – many of them originally from Seto – who benefited from access to new knowledge from overseas, including advances in glazes, ceramic techniques, and Western design trends, as well as from government-supported factories and schools. Their experimentation with new techniques and styles had a lasting impact on the development of modern Japanese ceramics. See:『横浜・東京―明治の輸出陶磁器』2008, 神奈川県立歴史博物館, p. 9. (Contemporary ceramics and porcelain tableware produced for export can be viewed in the exhibition booklet.)

[706]『墺国博覧会筆記』Meiji 6. (1873) december; Source: https://web.archive.org/web/20190723050213/http://www.ndl.go.jp/site_nippon/vienna/section3/hikki/page12.html; https://web.archive.org/web/20190723050151/http://www.ndl.go.jp/site_nippon/vienna/section2/chapter3/page02.html (accessed: 2025 Nov.)

knowledge and skills of the Japanese people and promote science and the arts.[707] The **fourth** point focused on increasing exports of high-quality Japanese products that were popular in the West.[708] The success of this approach is reflected in the short table below, which shows exports of Japanese-made ceramics and porcelain.[709] It is clear that the effort invested in promoting the export of these goods to the West was not in vain, even though implementing this initiative required nearly 50% of the national budget.[710] Before shipping the exhibition collection to Vienna, a memorial event was held in 1872 showcasing objects prepared for the 1873 Vienna World's Fair.

Year	Export value (yen)
Meiji 5. (1872.)	45,531
Meiji 15. (1882.)	578,641
Meiji 25. (1892.)	1,480,411
Meiji 35. (1902.)	2,461,544
Meiji 45. (1912.)	5,533,251

[707] This led to the establishment of national industrial exhibitions (naikoku kangyō hakurankai, 内国勧業博覧会), which served to boost Japanese trade and national industry by promoting and competing with local products; at the same time, they sought to support direct exports by bypassing foreign intermediaries. The first Domestic Industrial Exposition was held in 1877 in a new Western-style brick building in Ueno. Organized largely by the Home Ministry, each prefecture displayed items in six categories – metallurgy and mining, manufactured goods, arts, machinery, agriculture, horticulture, plus education – modeled on the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition. Prizes for outstanding works were introduced for the first time. Japan used a large system of competitive prize exhibitions alongside its patent system to promote innovation and technology diffusion. Between 1886 and 1911, 8,503 competitions were held across 47 prefectures, displaying 9.9 million exhibits and awarding about 1.2 million prizes, mostly medals. The competitions were highly popular, attracting 17 million ticket sales between 1886 and 1898. Unlike patents, prizes were awarded ex post, rewarding innovations that had already been developed. The system significantly accelerated technological adoption. In textile and agricultural machinery, patents in 1908 were over 40 times higher than in 1888, compared to an 11-fold increase in patents overall. Innovation also spread geographically: inventors from fewer than 5 prefectures held patents in these sectors in 1888, but by 1908 inventors from more than 30 prefectures were receiving patents. Japan's patent system, established in 1885, complemented the prize competitions. Although maintaining a patent in 1900 cost 3.3 times more than in the United States, it remained relatively inexpensive compared to Europe – about half the cost of France, 36% of Britain's, and 10% of Germany's. Together, patents protected intellectual property while prize exhibitions encouraged competition, publicized new technologies, and spread knowledge. Their impact was substantial: in 1898, around 1 million people attended exhibitions in a population of 45.4 million. See: Tom Nicholas: *Hybrid Innovation in Meiji Japan*. In: International Economic Review, Vol. 54. No. 2., 2013. pp. 576-584.

[708] It is worth mentioning here that the Czech porcelain production in Elbogen (now Loket, Czech Republic) on the Austrian side also attracted the interest of the Japanese government. In the sixth year of Meiji, three Japanese porcelain manufacturers from Arita made a study trip to Elbogen. See: 長井千春, 宮崎清『ウィーン万博における陶磁器分野の伝習地ボヘミア地方の役割：日本とドイツの陶磁器産業とデザインに関する研究(2)』デザイン学研究 54(2), 83-92, 2007-07-31 , 日本デザイン学会

[709]『横浜・東京―明治の輸出陶磁器』2008, 神奈川県立歴史博物館, p. 14.

[710] Those interested can also read an interesting numerical comparison of the market competition between Japanese and Chinese porcelain at the time here: 馮赫陽『近代中国における日中陶磁器の市場競争について』或問 No. 16. 2009, pp. 99-116.

The World Exposition opened on May 1, shortly after the Japanese delegation had begun preparing a catalogue, unpacking and arranging exhibits, and completing the Japanese garden. The team had to work very intensively to finish on time. The Japanese Exhibition Committee produced two publications for visitors interested in Japan and its exhibits. One, published in Yokohama in February 1873, provided information on Japan's geography, history, commerce, government, and listed the members of the exhibition committee. The other exhibition catalogue, printed in German in Vienna shortly after the delegation's arrival, listed art, craft, industrial, and agricultural objects in 25 categories. It was likely translated from Japanese – possibly by Heinrich von Siebold – but prepared under severe time pressure, leaving no opportunity for thorough proofreading. As a result, it lacked detailed information such as object sizes, full manufacturer names, and clear identification of artists, making it difficult for scholars today to determine exactly which works and exhibitors were included.[711] When the Weltausstellung opened in May, the Japanese section showcased 6,668 objects and product samples from 4,377 exhibitors. The Japanese handicrafts included lacquerware, ukiyo-e prints,[712] ceramics, inlays, and gold and silver objects, but the collection also featured Japanese board games, musical instruments, hinamatsuri dolls, porcelain figurines, silkworm cocoons, raw silk, textiles, and Japanese paper. In addition, visitors could see a variety of Japanese commodities, such as bear skins, fish and birds from the Japanese coast, rice, plants, and seaweed.[713] Japanese architecture was represented through miniature models. On a 4,000-square-meter site, the Japanese built a Shinto shrine, a garden, a music and dance hall, and an arched bridge,

[711] Peter Pantzer: *The World Exposition in Vienna in 1873: Japan's role and influence among all participating nations - New Sources*. In: 文明 No.23, 2018., pp. 27-29.; A detailed retrospective list is available here: 横溝廣子「ウイーン万国博覧会出品目録草稿（美術工芸編）」編集: 東京国立文化財研究所美術部, I - III, No. 357. (July 1993) pp. 38-74; No. 358. (Dec. 1993) pp. 31-59; No. 359. (March 1994), pp. 30-68.

[712] "Floating world paintings", Japanese genre paintings created using woodblock printing techniques depicting the flourishing life of the Edo period. From the Vienna Exposition onward, the Meiji government excluded woodblock prints from international exhibitions. Although fourteen prints were shown in the Japanese section at the 1873 Vienna World Exhibition – the first and last such display – they were presented for educational and promotional purposes rather than as works of art. This reflected the government's view that Edo and Meiji woodblock prints were not fine art, despite their recognition as art according to international standards. Freya Terryn: *To Exhibit or Not to Exhibit: The Ministry of the Interior and Japanese Woodblock Prints at the World's Fairs of 1876 and 1878.* In: Annals of Dimitre Cantemir Christian University. VOLUME XVIII No.1/2019., pp. 169-172.

[713]『墺国博覧会筆記』Meiji 6. (1873) december; pp. 9.-12.; Source: https://web.archive.org/web/20190722144251/http://www.ndl.go.jp/site_nippon/vienna/section3/hikki/index.html (accessed: 2025 Nov.)

while ukiyo-e prints and craft products were shown in the Industrial Pavilion. Among the larger exhibits were a papier-mâché replica of the Great Buddha statue in Kamakura, a three-and-a-half-meter Japanese paper lantern (chōchin), a two-meter-diameter Japanese drum (dadaiko), and the enormous golden finial of the south tower of Nagoya Castle, shaped like a female dolphin (many objects at world exhibitions were deliberately oversized, reflecting intense cultural competition between nations and serving as clear symbols of national pride and power). Since architecture was a central theme of the Vienna exhibition, the Japanese pavilion prominently featured a large model of an Edo-period daimyō residence (buke hinagata: 武家雛形). Smaller items for sale – such as lacquerware, ceramics, and Japanese toys – proved immensely popular with visitors. The demand for Japanese fans was so high that thousands were sold each day.[714] Although souvenirs were generally not allowed to be sold at the World's Fair, East Asian countries were exempt from this rule.[715] A contemporary report states the following about this:

> "*Before the opening of our exhibition, foreigners passing by the Japanese booth received gifts of local items such as bamboo canes and pieces of wood. Later, after the exhibition opened, these worthless items were only available for purchase, with fans selling for 30–40 kreuzers each, and hundreds of them sold. The Japanese began 'steigering'[716] with true Viennese nature – today, a simple fan costs 1 forint 50 kreuzers. This is how the sons of Japan strive to master Western civilization.*"[717]

The Japanese exhibition at Vienna was a major success, attracting large crowds and earning about 218 awards and medals. Of all the exhibits, pottery, lacquerware, cloisonné, inlay work, straw crafts[718], and dyed leatherwork drew especially positive

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[714] A Viennese newspaper reported that about 3,000 Japanese fans were sold daily. Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt. 2nd Vol., No. 170, 22 June 1873, p. 4.; The success of Japanese folding fans in Vienna led local manufacturers to produce their own versions, which also became very popular.

[715] 西川智之『ウィーンのジャポニズム（前編）1873年ウィーン万国博覧会』p. 184.

[716] inflating the price

[717] *A bécsi nemzetközi mű- és ipar-kiállítás*. In: Nemere, 3. évf., 53. szám, 1873. szeptember 19. p. 212.

[718] The Imperial Royal Austrian Museum of Art and Industry (now the MAK) acquired a collection of Japanese braided straw work for its Works on Paper Collection. Made by a craftsman from Tokyo's Ōmori district, these pieces originated as tourist souvenirs along the historic Tōkaidō trade route, where straw marquetry had been produced since the 18th century. In Vienna, the works were reinterpreted not only as examples of exotic decorative design but also as models that influenced the development of the local straw industry and its educational institutions.

attention. Sales of samples during the exhibition totaled 83,200 Austrian gulden.[719] After the exhibition closed, most of the items were sold to museums and private collectors across Europe. Valuable or historically significant pieces, like the Nagoya Castle ridge turret (鯱鉾), a giant drum (大太鼓) from Nikko, and a classical gagaku instrument, were returned to Japan. Unfortunately, some items were lost when a cargo ship sank off the Izu Peninsula in spring 1874 due to a typhoon. The British trading company Alexander Park purchased part of the exhibit on the advice of Philip C. Owen. Following this success, the Kiryū/Kiritsu Kōshō Gaisha (起立工商会社 1873–1891), founded by Gisuke Matsuo (1837–1902) and antique merchant Kenzaburō Wakai (1834–1908), was established to sell Japanese industrial art abroad (with branches in Paris and New York), generating significant foreign revenue.[720] In Japan, the company focused on producing export-oriented craft objects and refining their designs.

At the 1873 Weltausstellung in Vienna, countries displayed their main products alongside East Asian objects from European collectors and institutions. Hungarian Count Jenő Zichy, János Xántus, Count Pallavicini, Géza Kárász, Marquis Franz zu Salm-Reifferscheid, and H. Carl Trau contributed items, including Edo-period samurai armor, weapons, and decorative pieces. Selection focused on unusual materials and rare techniques like cloisonné enamel, mostly from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, alongside nineteenth-century objects from the Museum of Applied Arts.[721]

Apart from the overall success, we find a scandalous moment as well. During the Fair, a separate, private Japanese tea house staffed by three women and two men from Yokohama drew intense attention. Baron Raimund von Stillfried set up this private tea house where the Japanese women served tea, sake, and tobacco, interacting freely with guests. Western media, however, depicted it as a “pleasure house”, a reputation that deeply embarrassed the official Japanese delegation, which sought to present Japan as modern and civilized. Officials subsequently relocated the tea house to a

Lilli Hollein and Mio Wakita: *The 1873 Vienna World's Fair Revisited - Egypt and Japan as Europe's "Orient"*. MAK, 2023., p. 51.

[719] Nobukata Kutsuzawa: *The 1873 Vienna World Exposition and Japan’s Participation: Focusing on Japan’s Industrial Promotion Policy in the Early Meiji Period*. In: 文明, No.23, 2018. p. 10.

[720] Manuel Schilcher: *Japan debuts in the West: Historic World Fairs on Display.* (Edited abstract from doctoral Thesis “Appropriate Japan: How Western Art prepared a Nation for War”, University of Art and Design Linz, 2019.), pp. 5-6.

[721] Mirjam Dénes, Györgyi Fajcsák, Piotr Spławski, Toshio Watanabe: *Japonisme in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.* Museum of Fine Arts–Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, 2020. p. 68-69.

remote area, but the situation escalated when a Japanese staff member accused Stillfried of physical assault, withholding wages, and attempted insurance fraud. (Japanese carpenter Genkichi complained to exhibition official Alexander Siebold about the abusive conditions faced by him and other Japanese workers. They reportedly endured unpaid wages, intimidation, physical abuse, and repeated assaults. Genkichi alleged that their employer, Stillfried, ordered him to set fire to the teahouse as part of an insurance fraud scheme.) Although the outcome of these allegations is unknown, records show that Stillfried returned to Yokohama bankrupt in late 1873, leaving without his employees.[722]

The Vienna World's Fair, opened by Emperor Franz Joseph in 1873, was the first in the German-speaking world, designed to showcase the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the best possible light. In this context, it may be interesting to review contemporary press opinions about the World's Fair and Japan's participation in it.

> "*What the Olympic Games meant in ancient times, what battles meant to warlike peoples, and what temple festivals meant to religious peoples, world exhibitions mean to economically minded peoples.*"[723]

After the defeats suffered against the Italians and Prussians in 1859 and 1866, Austria sought to present itself to the international public as a politically, economically, and culturally strengthened country. Vienna's application can even be seen as a form of rivalry with Berlin, the new imperial capital. After 1871, the policies of the great powers justified Austria's rapprochement with Bismarck and the normalization of relations; in this spirit, the exhibition was held under the banner of "reconciliation between nations" (*Verbrüderungsfest der Nationen*). The exhibition transformed the cityscape of Vienna, including the construction of the Ringstraße, the integration of the suburbs into the 1st district, the building of hotels, the expansion of the tram network, and improvements in the number and quality of streets. Part of the Prater served as the venue for the exhibition. The Vienna Expo, held on 233 hectares with 53,000 exhibitors from more than 35 countries, far surpassed the earlier events in London (1851, 1862) and Paris

[722] Lilli Hollein and Mio Wakita: *The 1873 Vienna World's Fair Revisited - Egypt and Japan as Europe's "Orient"*. MAK, 2023., p. 57.
[723] Földes (Weisz) Béla: *Volkswirthschaftliche Betrachtungen über die Weltausstellung zu Wien im Jahre 1873*. Pest, 1873. p. 6. English translation is based on Hedvig Újvári's Hungarian translation. Translated by the author.

(1855, 1867). During the six months of the exhibition, the Hungarian German-language press regularly reported on the events. Hedvig Újvári attempted to reconstruct the picture conveyed by letters to the editor in the most important German-language newspapers in Hungary, a medium that has received relatively little scholarly attention. (After the Compromise, Hungarian political dailies had a subscriber base of just over 10,000, while German-language newspapers, especially from Vienna and Hungary, sold two to three times better. In 1875, two million copies of Hungarian-language political papers were circulated, compared with five and a half million German-language copies.)[724] In terms of preparation, Japan was depicted in the press as a nation of hard-working people.[725] According to a columnist for the Neues Pester Journal, the Japanese were the real attraction of the exhibition, but the journalist could not dismiss the feeling that the Asians found the "European barbarians" ridiculous.[726] Among the colorful crowd that flocked to the opening, almost everyone's attention was drawn to the Hungarian magnates in their national dress, who caused quite a stir among the audience. In keeping with the playful style of the feuilleton, a journalist described how a Hungarian count's appearance so captivated a young Japanese man that he stood there with his mouth open for a full quarter of an hour.[727] Neues Pester Journal praised the Turkish, Greek, and Russian exhibitions as exemplary and highlighted the presentations by Egypt, Japan, and China, noting that the latter appeared strange to some and magical to others. It observed that visitors to these non-Western pavilions could learn something tangible, while Western exhibitions overwhelmed visitors with details, emphasizing industry over people.[728]

The Hungarian press also paid attention to the event, as did museums that sought to supplement their collections of East Asian art with purchases from the Vienna exhibition, with ceramics being the primary acquisitions.[729] Overall, the Japanese achieved their goals, as their exhibition section generally received extremely good press

[724] Ujvári Hedvig: *Bazár és nagypolitika között - Az 1873. évi bécsi világkiállításról szóló tárcalevelek a magyarországi német nyelvű napilapokban.* In: Századok, 141. évf. 3. sz., 2007. p. 725.
[725] Salamander: *Ausstellungsbriefe. II.* = UL 1873. April 30. 99., pp. 1–2.
[726] J. D-tsch.: *Noch etwas von unseren Gästen.* = NPJ 1873. July 30. 174., pp. 1–2.
[727] Karl Emil Franzos: *Wiener Weltausstellungs-Bilder. I. Die Eröffnung.* = UL 1873. May 3. 101., pp. 1–3.
[728] Karl Ludwig: *Die Weltausstellung in Wien.* = NPJ 139.
[729] Bincsik Mónika: *A budapesti Hopp Ferenc Kelet-ázsiai Művészeti Múzeum japán gyűjteményének kialakulásához és korai történetéhez*. In: Tanulmányok a magyar-japán kapcsolatok történetéből, Bp., ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2009., p. 93. For example, the Japanese sold giant vases for around 5-6,000 forints.

coverage in Hungary, with the Japanese being described, for example, as "*the friendliest and most cultured people in the East*". In addition, the artistic layout was praised: "*The Japanese tobacco leaves exhibited here (...) depict the shape of a mythological bird when viewed from a distance. (...) It is in such seemingly insignificant things that the spirit of these interesting and intelligent people manifests itself most faithfully*".[730] The summary of Japanese participation was written in the Hungarian Vasárnapi Újság by János Xántus:

> "*(...) if anyone examines Japanese industry calmly, without prejudice and without expecting miracles at every turn, and everything else that is connected with the social development of this truly admirable people, it is impossible not to appreciate – and in many respects even admire – the diligence, ingenuity, resourcefulness, and taste that these people have developed on their own. But not only has it developed these qualities, it has in many respects brought them to such perfection that it stands head and shoulders above all other Asian peoples, and in some branches of industry has fought its way to the top of the world, to such an extent that it has no competitors to date.*"[731]

The Vienna World's Fair naturally gave new impetus to Austrian art collecting related to Japan. The *Museum für Angewandte Kunst (Museum of Applied Arts)* in Vienna based its Asian collection on material collected by Karl Scherzer during his expedition to East Asia in 1869, which was subsequently expanded through purchases and donations made possible by the World's Fair. This led to the establishment of the *Oriental Museum (Orientalisches Museum)*,[732] furnished with objects purchased by the *Circle Oriental*, a society created specifically for the World's Fair. The expansion of the *Oriental Museum*'s collection was due in part to Heinrich von Siebold. Siebold himself was a collector, and in 1884 he placed part of his collection in the *Oriental Museum*, while the larger portion went to the *Natural History Museum* in Vienna. The latter now makes up half of the Japanese collection of the *Museum für Völkerkunde (Museum of*

[730] *A bécsi nemzetközi mű- és ipar-kiállítás*. In: Nemere, 3. évf., 53. szám, 1873. szeptember 19. p. 212.
[731] Vasárnapi Újság, 1874. március 15., p. 163. Translated by the author
[732] From 1886: Austrian Trade Museum (Österreichisches Handelsmuseum), which was dissolved in 1905 and its collection distributed among other museums.

Ethnology), which became independent in 1928. (In 2009, this museum[733] hosted the exhibition *Made in Japan*, marking the 140th anniversary of Austrian-Japanese relations and placing great emphasis on objects and documents from the East Asian expedition, the Vienna World's Fair, and 19th-century Austrian collections.) From the exhibited Japanese objects, the Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna acquired lacquerware, textiles, leather, and metal items, supplemented by Japanese gifts such as ceramics, lacquer-making tools, textile samples, and silk paintings. The Czech lands, then part of the Austrian half of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, also played a role in collection-building on this occasion: two applied arts museums opened in May 1873, in Liberec and Brno. The Liberec museum obtained Japanese lacquer boxes, plates, ivory rings, a silver-plated bronze bowl, wicker and bamboo items, combs, and a paper-covered case, while Brno's museum primarily collected everyday Japanese lacquer, pewter, and bamboo objects.[734]

The Vienna World's Fair brought many achievements for Hungary: it was there that the first collection of the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest (founded in 1872) began, and it was there that Ányos Jedlik received the highest recognition from the international jury, chaired by Werner von Siemens – the Medal for Progress – for his invention of a tubular voltage generator (*csöves villámfeszítő berendezés*), an early voltage-multiplying device. Zsolnay[735] ceramics also gained wide recognition there. The Japanese likewise took note of Zsolnay porcelain: thirty years later, after the 1900 World's Fair in Paris, the company secured an order from Japan following a factory visit in Pécs. Zsolnay porcelain was sold in Yokohama, and we know that the director of the Kyoto Art High School, a certain Mr. Nakazawa, purchased a 25-piece Zsolnay sample set between 1902 and 1909.[736] Members of the Iwakura Mission attended the 1873 World's Fair in Vienna as well, as recorded by Kunitake Kume, the mission's chronicler. In his account, he noted that the Hungarian exhibition in Vienna featured few distinctive

[733] The Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna still exists, but under a new name: it's now called the Weltmuseum Wien.
[734] Mirjam Dénes, Györgyi Fajcsák, Piotr Spławski, Toshio Watanabe: *Japonisme in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.* Museum of Fine Arts–Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, 2020. p. 70.
[735] Hungarian ceramics manufacturer, founded in 1853 in Pécs, known for its innovative porcelain and eosin-glazed decorative pieces
[736] Based on Tamás Mattyasovszky Zsolnay's eight-volume "*Collection of Newspaper Clippings*" (Vol 3. pp. 338-339.)

elements and was further complicated by its integration with the Austrian displays, making it difficult to distinguish the exhibits of the two countries.[737] He praised the knitwear, woolen goods, and leather products, regarding them as being of excellent quality. Several Hungarian mining exhibits attracted the interest of the Japanese delegation. Among the minerals on display, Kume made special mention of an opal stone mined in Somogy, observing that Somogy County was the only place in the world where this mineral was extracted. In his work, he additionally highlighted the Hungarian geological maps and instruments for their detailed design, as well as the iron and copper castings for their outstanding quality.[738]

It is little known that the 1873 Vienna World's Fair became an important starting point for the international popularization of the kimono, thanks to silk merchant Shōbei Shiino (椎野正兵衛), who was commissioned by the Meiji government to explore Western markets for profitable silk products. After his visit, he began producing and exporting premium, handmade silk garments and accessories, including home gowns and dressing robes tailored to Western tastes. Adapting traditional Japanese techniques – such as straight seams and kimono construction – he modified designs for export, adding decorative elements like tassels, braided cords, and skirt-like flares. His company, the Shiino Shobey Silk Store, quickly became highly successful. Later, another notable exporter, the department store Takashimaya (高島屋), also created specially adapted kimonos for foreign markets, reflecting similar modifications in design and silhouette to appeal to Western consumers.[739]

The Vienna World Exhibition brought Japanese gardens to international attention, too. In 1873, the gardens on display in Vienna reflected Meiji policies promoting state Shinto.[740] This political dimension shaped the design and presentation of Japanese

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[737] Kume Kunitake: *The Iwakura Embassy 1871-73 – A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary's Journey of Observation Through the United States of America and Europe V*. The Japan Documents, 2002., pp. 29., 36.

[738] Kume Kunitake: *The Iwakura Embassy 1871-73 – A True Account of the Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary's Journey of Observation Through the United States of America and Europe V*. The Japan Documents, 2002., p. 29.

[739] Manuel Schilcher: *Inventing the Kimono - Ways the West created a Japanese tradition*. Atelier Furusato, p. 15. http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16507.94248

[740] Researchers argue that the Japanese garden at the Vienna World Exhibition was not particularly "Japanese," as it mixed elements such as a torii gate and a Shintō shrine – features not typically associated with garden design, especially since Shintō shrines usually do not include gardens. This blending reflected the Meiji government's promotion of State Shintō to legitimize imperial rule. However, this approach remained exceptional. Later exhibition

garden aesthetics and architecture, aligning them with broader governmental objectives. Exhibitions and related ventures also expanded public access to Japanese-style gardens beyond aristocratic circles. The garden created for the Vienna Exposition was later relocated to Alexandra Park in London, while private companies established simplified Japanese gardens and "native villages" in parks and halls across Britain. Themed enterprises, such as teahouses, and private gardens opened to visitors further increased public exposure to Japanese gardens. Nevertheless, a Japanese garden was not exhibited again at a World's Fair until twenty years later, at the Chicago International Exposition of 1893. From Vienna in 1873 to Liege in 1905, Japanese garden exhibits maintained consistent themes – bazaars, temples, teahouses, and planted areas – growing only in size and ornamentation, presenting a fixed image of Japan that supported Meiji promotional goals.[741] In Hungary, the earliest Japanese garden was created in the early 1900s by the Hungarian traveler and collector Ferenc Hopp, as a 1904 article attests.[742] By 1911, his private Japanese garden featured a small bridge, flower beds, Japanese, Chinese, and Indian stone sculptures, as well as ginkgo trees and Japanese roses.[743] Undoubtedly, the most famous Japanese garden was created in 1912 in the *Angol Park (English Park)* in Budapest's *Városliget*.[744] *English Park* was billed as the largest summer family entertainment venue, and it was there that the Japanese Garden opened on 12 May 1912. The garden featured "*magnificent vegetation and a beautiful layout*" as well as a lavishly furnished café and restaurant where a military band performed, and a "*charming little variety show*" featuring singers

gardens were designed to more closely resemble "typical" Japanese gardens inspired by Buddhist temple grounds. For example, at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Japan built a replica of the Buddhist Hōōden (Phoenix Hall) and created a garden in a style more consistent with temples and tea gardens in Japan. The first framework for understanding Japanese gardens emerged about 20 years later, in 1893, with the publication of Josiah Conder's systematic guide to Japanese gardening. Although the Japanese government had achieved great success at world fairs, there had previously been no clear structure in the West for interpreting Japanese gardens. In the meantime, public discourse developed through books and newspaper articles, and private as well as commercial gardens were established independently of the Meiji government. This growing Western interest likely helped the Meiji government refine how it presented Japanese gardens internationally. See: Christian Tagsold: *Orte exotischer Fremdheit: Japanische Gärten auf Ausstellungen nach 1900*. In: Nipponspiration: Japonismus und japanische Populärkultur im deutschsprachigen Raum, ed. Michiko Mae and Elisabeth Scherer, Köln, Böhlau Verlag, 2013., pp. 93-112.

[741] Luke Schöppler: *The Meiji Legacy: Gardens and Parks of Japan and Britain, 1850-1914*. PhD Thesis. University of Derby, 2020., pp. 100.; 111.; 113.

[742] Kertészeti lapok 1904. Szeptember, 9. szám

[743] Pesti Napló, 1911-04-26

[744] Az Ujság, 1912-05-12.

and dancers from the afternoon until midnight. There was a small sales area run by János Kotányi, who sold Japanese art and souvenirs, and a *Japán Bár (Japanese Bar)* established by the renowned Hungarian champagne producer, the Törley Company. Other 'attractions' included the "*Senegalese village*" or "*Egyptian Negro village*" an "*Alpine village*" serving Bavarian beer and featuring a Tyrolean band, an "*American elevated railway*" a Ferris wheel, an "*enchanted castle*" a "*cave railway*" and a skating rink. The admission fee was set at 20 fillér.[745]

Several important events in 1873 had an impact on the World Exhibition. The three cities on the banks of the Danube – Pest, Buda, and Óbuda – were united to form Budapest. The Vienna stock market crash ("Gründerkrach") occurred, resulting in losses of 1.5 billion forints, compounded by the exhibition's financial deficit. These setbacks were further exacerbated by a cholera epidemic, which broke out in Vienna about two months after the exhibition opened and claimed approximately 3,000 victims. Despite these difficulties, the World's Fair offered an opportunity for both Vienna and Budapest to assert themselves as global cities, while the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy succeeded in enhancing its foreign-policy prestige.[746]

Vienna was an economic success for the Japanese, with numerous prizes awarded to their exhibits. Although the top awards were only honorable mentions, this marked the first step toward recognition and acceptance.[747] Following Japan's success at the 1873 Vienna World Exposition, foreign adviser Gottfried Wagener remained in Europe to tour art schools and museums with Tsunetami Sano. Wagener, head of the German science society in Tokyo (OAG), oversaw Japan's contribution to the 1876 Philadelphia World Exposition, helped found the National Museum, and modernized ceramics, porcelain, and cloisonné production using Western technologies. Tsunetami Sano established the Ryūchikai (龍池会) in 1879, the precursor to the Japan Art Association, to prevent the export of important Japanese cultural properties.[748]

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[745] Világ, 1912-05-07, 1912-05-26, 1912-05-28; *A Budapesti Ujságirók Egyesülete Almanachja*, 1912.
[746] Anna Minichberger: *Die Japanischen Lackarbeiten der Wiener Weltausstellung von 1873 im Österreichischen Museum für Angewandte Kunst*, Diplomarbeit, 2007. Universität Wien
[747] Martha Chaiklin: *The Fine Arts of Imperialism: Japan's participation in International Expositions of the Nineteenth Century*. In: Japan Studies Review 12. 2008. p. 4.
[748] Manuel Schilcher: Invented Tradition. p. 51. https://www.academia.edu/39908757/Invented_Tradition (accessed: 2025 Dec)

After the Vienna World's Fair, Japanese art gained further global popularity through events such as the 1876 Philadelphia[749] and 1878 Paris Expositions, fueling Japonisme. As Elizabeth H. Yusem Meyers observes, the real significance of Japan's repeated participation in World's Fairs and Expos was not how critics viewed its objects, but rather the surge of media attention it generated, as the Japanese exhibits triggered "*an avalanche of articles and illustrations in periodicals*" after the fairs opened.[750] Ultimately, one of the most significant results of Japan's continued participation in world expositions was their impact on certain mediums – such as bronze metalwork, ceramics, lacquerware[751], cloisonné enamel[752], and textiles – which were largely shaped by Western demand. Japanese artists and manufacturers incorporated Western-inspired designs by applying imagery from ukiyo-e prints onto lacquer and ceramics, catering to the strong Western demand for Japanese color woodblock prints.[753]

Japoniserie and Japonisme in the West and in the Kingdom of Hungary

The earliest notable European collection of Japanese prints was assembled by Dutch physician Philipp Franz von Siebold in the 1820s. Although it opened to the public in Leiden in 1837, it had little impact on Western artists, likely due to the absence of a

[749] The Japanese government committed $600,000 to the event in Philadelphia. It was the largest sum invested by any of the thirty participating nations. See: Elizabeth H. Yusem Meyers: *Meiji Craft and Japonisme: The Japanese Exhibits at the Philadelphia and Chicago World's Fairs and the Structuring of American taste*. Thesis. Brooklyn, NY: Pratt Institute, 2013., pp. 27-28.
[750] Elizabeth H. Yusem Meyers: *Meiji Craft and Japonisme: The Japanese Exhibits at the Philadelphia and Chicago World's Fairs and the Structuring of American Taste*. Thesis. Brooklyn, NY: Pratt Institute, 2013., p. 32.
[751] Japanese lacquerware underwent notable changes, with artisans developing sophisticated gold-leaf techniques to create intricate pictorial effects. Because the West had no tradition of lacquer-making, buyers were initially unfamiliar with the complex production process, making high-quality pieces seem overpriced. Despite this early hesitation, Japanese lacquerware ultimately sold in the thousands.
[752] Cloisonné enamel, though introduced in Japan around 1600 for small decorative details, developed into a major export art form by the mid-19th century, with vases, bowls, and plates being produced. By the 1880s, Japanese enamels were regarded among the finest in the world, aided by Western technical expertise. Japanese artisans refined the craft to an exceptional level, but interest in cloisonné declined rapidly after 1900, likely because it had few roots in traditional Japanese arts and lacked a domestic market once Western orders fell.
[753] Elizabeth H. Yusem Meyers: *Meiji Craft and Japonisme: The Japanese Exhibits at the Philadelphia and Chicago World's Fairs and the Structuring of American Taste*. Thesis. Brooklyn, NY: Pratt Institute, 2013., pp. 50-56.

large-scale commercial network.[754] Later, the popularity of temporary and permanent local and international exhibitions,[755] along with Japanese art collections, helped fuel the rise of Japonisme in Europe. This initially manifested as curiosity and interest in Japanese fine arts and developed, to some extent, as a continuation of Chinoiserie – an interest in Chinese fine arts.[756] At that time, it was still referred to as "Japoniserie". It describes works created using Japanese motifs and does not extend beyond an interest in "exotic" cultural customs. In contrast, Japonisme is an active form of artistic expression that draws inspiration from Japanese art, manifests in new creations, and seeks fresh perspectives. Over time, the term Japoniserie fell out of use, as Japonisme came to encompass its meaning.[757] When the term was coined (around 1870), it had several connotations. On one hand, it referred to a fondness for Japanese art objects, imitations, and other 'exotic' motifs of Japanese origin, often inspired by the style and compositional elements of Japanese ukiyo-e[758] – especially among French painters. Later, the concept of Japonisme came to signify the broader influence of Japanese art on European artistic practice.[759] Japanese art was first discovered in Paris in the second half of the 1850s. Many Japanese woodblock prints arrived in Paris during that decade, although the French did not attach particular value to them until 1856, when the French etcher Félix Bracquemond came across a sketchbook by Hokusai, the greatest Japanese woodblock artist, which completely captivated him.[760] He later began compiling a collection of ukiyo-e, which was also seen by contemporary French artists who incorporated Japanese influences into their work (e.g., Monet, Degas). Henri

[754] Rebecca Capua: *Japonisme and Japanese works on paper: Cross cultural influences and hybrid materials*. In: Adapt & Evolve 2015: East Asian Materials and Techniques in Western Conservation. Proceedings from the International Conference of the Icon Book & Paper Group, London, The Institute of Conservation, 2017., p. 30.
[755] The 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris marked Japan's first self-curated national exhibition. It spurred the influx of Japanese and Japan-inspired decorative goods into Paris in the late 1860s and the U.S. by 1885, with trade promotion being a key motivation for such exhibitions.
[756] A study discusses archaeological finds of Chinese porcelain in Hungary: Komori Tünde: *A magyarországi kínai porcelánleletek régészeti feldolgozásának lehetséges útjai.* In: Szőllősy Csilla - Pokrovenszki Krisztián (szerk.): Fiatal Középkoros Régészek VI. Konferenciájának Tanulmánykötete. A Szent István Király Múzeum Közleményei 51. Székesfehérvár, 2015.
[757] 馬渕明子『ジャポニスム―妄想の日本』Brücke, Tokyo, 1997. p. 10.
[758] For those interested in a fascinating presentation on ukiyo-e, this one is the best: Sarah Thompson: *The Many Worlds of Ukiyo-e Prints* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46w-140Zf9E (accessed: 2025 Dec.)
[759] Claudia Delank: *Das Imaginäre Japan in der Kunst. »Japanbilder« vom Jugendstil bis zum Bauhaus* Iudicum Verlag, München, 1996., p. 6.
[760] Karl Ritter von Scherzer, the economic leader of the 1869 East-Asian Austro-Hungarian expedition, also had access to Hokusai's sketchbook. In his book about the expedition, he wrote about Hokusai: "*it would be wise to remember this name*."

Rivière and Auguste-Louis Lepère began producing multicolour woodcuts in 1889, adapting Japanese techniques but handling all the work themselves rather than following the Japanese division of labor. In the 1890s, Rivière created two albums of 40 colour woodcuts each, noting that he had initially been ignorant of Japanese methods. Influenced by ukiyo-e, he helped establish colour as an aesthetic for artists' original prints, while also innovating in colour lithography alongside his woodcut series. Lithography was widely used by French artists working in the Japonisme style, particularly among those involved in the emerging poster art scene.

Chelsea Foxwell notes that early accounts of France's discovery of ukiyo-e often claim the prints were inexpensive objects that arrived in Europe almost by accident, sometimes serving as packing material for imported porcelain. Although Japanese art as a whole was little known in Europe during the late 1860s, ukiyo-e prints quickly attracted Western interest, and by the 1880s their popularity had risen dramatically (woodblock prints became known for their bright colors, bold gestural strokes, dramatic poses, dense compositions, and interplay of surface and depth). Foreign admirers of Japanese prints and decorative arts recognized these works as a way to challenge established academic conventions in their own countries. As prices climbed, many casual buyers became increasingly fixated on collecting Japanese art. This fascination encouraged a focus on the objects' visual appeal while ignoring cultural context. At the same time, a growing conflict emerged in Japan between ukiyo-e as an export good and the Western ideals of high art that were newly entering Japan. Foxwell argues that turning an inexpensive, sometimes sexually explicit object into a prized artwork was a central and even exaggerated part of the ukiyo-e collecting experience in the West. On the other hand, in Japan, there was concern that the Edo-period ukiyo-e – associated with moral and cultural decline – might come to represent Japanese art in the eyes of the West. As Foxwell describes it: "*to these Japanese elites, the European fixation on prints, with their awkward bathers, available prostitutes, and stylized actors, was a problematic Othering, a mischievous and patronizing delight in the less 'civilized' behaviors of the Japanese public*".[761] Japanese artists, exporters, and cultural officials

[761] Chelsea Foxwell: *Dekadansu: Ukiyo-e and the Codification of Aesthetic Values in Modern Japan, 1880-1930*. In: Octopus: A Visual Studies Journal. 3, 2007, p. 35.

were aware of Western fascination with Japanese art and sought to channel it for economic and political gain. However, they faced a challenge: Westerners preferred ancient works, while Japan needed to promote contemporary production. To maintain a profitable role in the market and prevent the loss of valuable antiquities, Japan began creating new works inspired by older pieces, as seen at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. These works often blurred the line between reproduction and innovation, with artists modifying originals to correct perceived weaknesses or moral issues, while demonstrating that contemporary Japanese art could match Western technical skill and aesthetic standards. Yet, Japanese attempts to tailor art for Western tastes largely failed. Works designed to appeal to Western viewers either imitated Western academic styles or showed 'too much mastery' of Western techniques, leaving them unsatisfying to the intended audience. Japan struggled to grasp that Western buyers actually desired naïve, 'authentically' Japanese objects, untouched by Western influence or the concept of art itself.[762]

By the 1867 Meiji Restoration, Japanese woodblock prints had been flourishing for over 200 years, centered in Edo, with Osaka and Kyoto as secondary hubs. At their peak in the 1850s, annual production may have reached 4–5 million prints. Over 150 publishers were active at the start of the Restoration, though this declined around 1900 due to photography and chromolithography. As a highly commercial art, publishers competed for top artists, producing minimum runs of 200–400 prints, with some designs exceeding 10,000 sheets. Prints were sold to a literate and affluent public, with triptychs priced at 4–7 sen.[763] Japanese cultural leaders often viewed these prints as inappropriate for display due to their low social status, medium, and perceived moral shortcomings. Manuel Schilcher notes that art produced by traditional schools and samurai reflected a tension between Chinese influences and indigenous Japanese culture, often serving political and moral purposes by reinforcing loyalty to superiors. While elite samurai artists favored nō theatre, popular entertainment such as kabuki was depicted by ukiyo-e artists and patronized by wealthy merchants. As isolationist

[762] Chelsea Foxwell: *Japan as Museum? Encapsulating Change and Loss in Late-Nineteenth-Century Japan.* In: Getty Research Journal 2009/1., pp. 45-47.
[763] *Prints of the Meiji Era – A Reflection of Modernity Source: The Lavenberg Collection of Japanese Prints* www.myjapanesehanga.com (accessed: 2025 Dec)

policies relaxed in the mid-eighteenth century, ukiyo-e artists blended European and Japanese techniques to create affordable woodblock prints portraying the hedonistic “floating world” of urban life. These prints, widely consumed by the public, became an independent art form and helped shape a distinctive urban culture driven by the tastes and patronage of a new economic elite. Although these works remained a minor genre from the late 1730s to the mid-nineteenth century, they demonstrate the growing influence of Western techniques on Japanese art. Until the late nineteenth century, woodblock prints functioned mainly as mass media documenting social and national developments rather than as fine art. Competing with the rise of photography, production was simplified, quality declined, and the value of prints dropped significantly, to the point that many were treated as disposable items such as wrapping paper.[764] Late ukiyo-e prints, being inexpensive and sometimes poorly made, reminded Japanese viewers of the medium’s humble origins, even as Western collectors elevated select works into high-value masterpieces. This produced a dual perspective in Japan that caused ukiyo-e to oscillate between being regarded as fine art and as cheap ephemera. The prints appealed as Western-celebrated artworks and as an originally accessible art of the common people, yet their strong ties to pleasure districts and popular entertainment conflicted with Western ideals of “high art”, exposing a fundamental tension in their international reception. From 1900 onward, Western connoisseurs categorized ukiyo-e as “primitive”, “classical”, or “decadent”, often using pejorative terms that nonetheless highlighted their visual appeal. Late prints, in particular, displayed an aesthetic of excess – dense lines, bold colors, intricate patterns, and dramatic subjects – that often conveyed movement, sex, and violence. As a popular, market-driven medium, ukiyo-e was highly responsive to contemporary events, often serving as a vehicle for irony, critique, and commentary. By contrast, state-supported *Nihonga*[765], promoted through institutions like the Imperial Art Exhibition, contrasted sharply with the popular ukiyo-e boom. Nihonga emphasized calm, spacious

[764] Manuel Schilcher: *Invented Tradition*. pp. 25-26., 29. https://www.academia.edu/39908757/Invented_Tradition (accessed: 2025 Dec)

[765] Nihonga (日本画, literally "Japanese painting") is a style of painting that emerged during the Meiji period as a modern reinterpretation of traditional Japanese painting. Promoted by figures such as Ernest Fenollosa and Kakuzō Okakura in response to the growing influence of Western art, it retained traditional materials and techniques while adapting them to a modern context.

compositions, pale colors, and elite, historic themes drawn from ancient Japanese art. Its techniques, dimensions, and surface treatments closely aligned with European academic painting, deliberately distancing viewers from the brash, provocative qualities of popular arts and asserting a modern concern with authenticity.[766]

Few writers capture contemporary attitudes toward Japanese art at the turn of the twentieth century as vividly as Basil Hall Chamberlain:

> "*There exists, it is true, nowadays a small band of foreign enthusiasts, who deny that the art of Japan is thus limited in its scope, and decorative rather than representative. Having studied it with greater zeal and profit than they have studied European art, they go so far as to put Japanese art on a level with that of Greece and Italy. These enthusiasts have performed and are still performing a useful function. They are disseminating a knowledge of Japanese art abroad, disseminating it, too, in Japan itself, where it had been suffered to fall into neglect. But their cult of Japanese art partakes of the nature of a religious faith, and like other religionists, they are apt to be deficient in the sense of humour. They are much too much in earnest ever to smile about such serious matters. For instance, one ardent admirer of Japonism(e) in art informs the public that the late painter Kyōsai 'was perhaps the greatest limner of crows that Japan, nay the whole world, has produced'. Does this not remind you of the artist in whose epitaph it was recorded that he was 'the Raphael of cats'? The Japanese are undoubtedly Raphaels of fishes, and insects, and flowers, and bamboo-stems swaying in the breeze; and they have given us charming fragments of idealised scenery. But they have never succeeded in adequately transferring to canvas 'the human form divine'; they have never made grand historical scenes live again before the eyes of posterity; they have never, like the early Italian masters, drawn away men's hearts from earth to heaven in an ecstasy of adoration. In a word, Japanese art, as Mr. Alfred East tersely said, when lecturing on the subject in Tokyo, is 'great in small things, but small in great things'.*"[767]

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[766] Chelsea Foxwell: *Dekadansu: Ukiyo-e and the Codification of Aesthetic Values in Modern Japan, 1880-1930*. In: Octopus: A Visual Studies Journal. 3, 2007, pp. 22-24., 29-31., 35., 39.

[767] Basil Hall Chamberlain: *Japanese Things - Being Notes on Various Subjects Connected with Japan*. Charles E. Tuttle Co., Rutland, Vermont & Tokyo, Japan. 1971. p. 53.

"*Wood Engraving. A far-off Chinese origin followed by centuries in the chrysalis stage, a wakening from torpor soon after A.D. 1600 when peace had replaced continual civil tumults, then a gradual working up to perfection, a golden age from, say, 1730 to 1830, after which sudden decline and death, – such we have seen to be the life-history of many Japanese arts, such is the life-history of the lovely art of wood engraving. (...) they display a tender harmony of colouring, a strength of touch, a power of composition, that elevate what at first strike a European as mere sketches to an ethereal form of art. When Hokusai and Hiroshige caught up the tradition, landscape was treated in an equally idealistic way. These colour-prints of the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century (...) stand alone and unrivalled, resembling nothing so much as certain beautiful butterflies of fantastic yet harmonious hue. (...) As happens to all arts, time brought with it greater complexity and a more florid taste. (...) the colours, after 1830, grew gaudy. The introduction of cheap European pigments, the troubles that attended the opening of the country, and the influence of debased European specimens hastened the downfall of the art.*"[768]

No discussion of Japonisme would be complete without considering the central role of color. When Japanese goods reached Western markets, their bright colors quickly became associated with Japan. Traditional Japanese prints and textiles used natural pigments and dyes. Natural dyes in Japan carried strong cultural meanings and were closely tied to social hierarchy and symbolism. Red was associated with young women and romantic transience, partly due to the fading nature of safflower dye, while sappanwood red was restricted to the aristocracy until the early Edo period. Purple, derived from murasaki, was regarded as the most prestigious color and reserved for nobility and royalty, because its production was complex and labor-intensive. The traditional palette of natural dyes was soon expanded by imported synthetic dyes that produced vivid purple, red, and green colors. Although it is often assumed that Japan

[768] Basil Hall Chamberlain: *Japanese Things - Being Notes on Various Subjects Connected with Japan*. Charles E. Tuttle Co., Rutland, Vermont & Tokyo, Japan. 1971. pp. 509-510.

began importing synthetic dyes in the Meiji period, recent research suggests that the transition may have started earlier, in the late Edo period, and developed gradually in a way similar to their uptake in other areas.[769] A scientific study of Meiji-era Japanese woodblock prints[770] challenged the common belief that Western synthetic dyes quickly and completely replaced traditional pigments after Japan opened to international trade. Using chemical analysis of prints from roughly 1860–1900, researchers found that the transition was gradual and selective. Most Edo-period colorants continued in use, and new dyes were adopted step by step rather than all at once. The key findings were these: (1) around 1863–1864, the first synthetic dye appeared in prints: rosaniline (magenta), mainly used for purple, often mixed with blue pigments; in 1869, a major shift occurred in red pigments: traditional safflower red was completely replaced by imported cochineal carmine. This became the dominant red for about two decades and was often mixed with vermilion; (2) from 1877, eosin (a synthetic pink-red dye) was introduced, and it did not replace carmine but was used alongside it, especially for pinks and darker reds; (3) from 1889 onward, naphthol red dyes appeared, and these were more vivid synthetic reds and gradually replaced carmine, though they were often used more sparingly because of their strong behavior on paper. The study emphasizes that color mixing and overprinting were common, and that printers frequently combined natural and synthetic pigments. Overall, the research argues that the “Meiji color revolution” was less sudden than often believed. Instead of a total replacement of traditional colors, there was a long, overlapping transition. Many Edo-period pigments persisted, and the most dramatic changes were in specific colors – especially purple and red – rather than in the entire palette. It notes that the intensity and widespread use of red in Meiji prints was partly due to economic and practical factors: imported dyes like carmine were cheaper, stronger, and easier to print with, allowing larger and more saturated color areas. By the late Meiji period, concerns about overly bright “garish” colors emerged, but at the same time print aesthetics were shifting toward more

[769] Maria Goretti Mieites Alonso, Marco Leona & Nobuko Shibayama: *From Edo to Shōwa: study on the transition from natural to synthetic dyes in kimono from the 19th to the 20th century*. In: npj Heritage Science, (2025) 13:538, 2025., pp. 1-2. https://doi.org/10.1038/s40494-025-02107-w

[770] Anna Cesaratto, Yan-Bing Luo, Henry D. Smith, Marco Leona: *A timeline for the introduction of synthetic dyestuffs in Japan during the late Edo and Meiji periods*. In: Cesaratto et al.: Herit Sci (2018) 6:22 https://doi.org/10.1186/s40494-018-0187-0

restrained, painterly styles, limiting the use of the strongest synthetic reds.[771] There are a few colors of particular interest in relation to Japonism(e), which will be discussed in more detail. *Prussian/Berlin blue*[772] was introduced to Japan during the Edo period, likely via Dutch traders at Dejima, and by the late Edo and Meiji periods it had become widely used in ukiyo-e woodblock prints for skies, water, and fabrics. The pigment, famously employed by Katsushika Hokusai, produced vivid, striking blues that traditional indigo or mineral-based pigments could not achieve. Western demand, supported by the growing availability of newly discovered European synthetic aniline dyes and by color printing techniques such as chromolithography, contributed to making some Japanese exports – including kimonos, fans, and prints – appear even more vivid, supplementing traditional Japanese pigments. Many of these dyes were chemically novel and potentially toxic, although this was not widely recognized at the time. As tastes inevitably change, by the late 19th century some Western collectors began to criticize the bright colors of Meiji-era prints as garish, expressing a preference for a more subdued palette.[773] Another dominant color in the Meiji era was the so-called "*Meiji red*", which refers to a group of very bright synthetic red pigments that appeared after Japan opened to foreign trade during the Meiji period. Before the Meiji era, Edo-period prints typically used more subdued organic reds derived from natural

[771] Carole Biron (et al.): *Colours of the « images of the floating world » Non-invasive analyses of Japanese ukiyo-e woodblock prints (18th and 19th centuries) and new contributions to the insight of oriental materials.* In: Microchemical Journal, Volume 152, 2020, p. 11.

[772] Blue became a status symbol in art because ultramarine was so rare and expensive. In the 1600s, Vermeer spent enormous sums – possibly driving his family into debt – to use its vivid color in works like *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. The pigment's creation was painstaking, requiring lapis lazuli to be ground, mixed with waxes and resins, and kneaded in lye to extract its pure blue particles. Its unmatched brilliance was so valued that art patrons sometimes had to fund ultramarine separately in contracts. Painters who tried to substitute cheaper blues like azurite or smalt risked damaging their reputations if discovered. Prussian Blue, historically known as *Berlinisch Blau* or *Prussian ultramarine*, was the first truly modern synthetic blue pigment. Unlike earlier blues made from crushed lapis lazuli or plant dyes, it emerged from a laboratory accident in 1706. Johann Jacob Diesbach, attempting to produce a red pigment, used potash contaminated with iron from Johann Conrad Dippel's alchemical experiments. The mixture unexpectedly turned a deep, stable, colour-fast blue – ferric ferrocyanide – marking the birth of Prussian Blue. The pigment spread rapidly across Europe in the early 1700s, replacing dull or unreliable blues like smalt and azurite. Its impact extended far beyond painting: it coloured military uniforms, official documents, printed materials, and eventually early photographic and blueprint processes. It even reached Japan, where ukiyo-e artists adopted it as "bero ai" (ベロ藍). By making vivid blue cheap, stable, and widely available, Prussian Blue transformed the colour from a costly rarity into an everyday feature of global art, textiles, and industry – launching a genuine "blue revolution" rooted in Berlin. Source: https://berlinexperiences.com/was-the-colour-blue-invented-in-berlin-mythbusting-berli/ (accessed: 2025 Nov.)

[773] Rebecca Capua: *Japonisme and Japanese works on paper: Cross cultural influences and hybrid materials*. In: Adapt & Evolve 2015: East Asian Materials and Techniques in Western Conservation. Proceedings from the International Conference of the Icon Book & Paper Group, London, The Institute of Conservation, 2017., p. 34., 43.

sources such as plants or insects. These earlier reds tended to be softer, less saturated, and more limited in brightness. After the Meiji Restoration, when foreign trade increased and Japan began importing new synthetic colorants from Europe in the late 19th century, aniline (coal-tar) dyes and related synthetic reds became available. These pigments were much more intense, often described as scarlet or almost fluorescent compared to earlier tones. They quickly became popular in woodblock prints, especially those depicting modern life, advertisements, and popular imagery. Over time, collectors and historians started using the informal term “Meiji red” to describe these striking imported reds, which are not a single chemical pigment but rather a range of colorants used in late 19th-century prints, including aniline dyes, eosin-based dyes, azo dyes, cochineal-based reds, and occasionally mixtures of these. Art historians also use the presence of these bright synthetic reds as a dating clue. If a print contains this vivid “Meiji red” it often suggests production from the late 1860s onward. In some cases, it can indicate a later reprint of an earlier design. Another noteworthy dimension of color use is their potential toxicity. Regarding safety, ‘Meiji reds’ are generally not considered highly toxic in finished prints. Their risk depends on the specific pigment: synthetic dyes like aniline are usually of low toxicity in final form, while some traditional pigments occasionally used in reds, such as vermilion (mercury-based) or red lead, can be toxic if their particles are ingested or inhaled. In the context of printed artworks these pigments are typically bound and stable. In this context, recent studies[774] are focusing on Japanese crepe-paper books (chirimen-bon), which became popular in the late 19th century as souvenir books. They often contained Japanese fairy tales and poems with multicolored woodblock illustrations and were also published in European languages in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It is not widely known that they frequently used arsenic-based pigments, especially orpiment (arsenic trisulfide), which had been used in Japanese book production since the mid-18th century and in synthetic form by the mid-19th century. Despite its toxicity, it was valued for its bright, fade-resistant yellow and may also have helped preserve books over time by deterring pests; it was

[774] In 2025, Yukie Baba (International Research Center for Japanese Studies, National Institutes for Humanities, JSPS KAKENHI JP24K03234) began building a database of historical Japanese books containing toxic substances, including chirimen-bon held in libraries worldwide.

additionally mixed with blue dyes to produce green and with vermilion (mercury sulfide) to create orange.

A growing fascination with color and visual aesthetics helped shape French interest in collecting Japanese objects, beginning with Edmond and Jules de Goncourt. The art-loving brothers exerted great influence on French art of the period; their activities contributed significantly to Japonism(e) becoming a fashion that lasted for decades, first in France, and later in England, Germany, and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.[775] The French term *Japonisme* first appeared in 1872 in an article entitled *La Renaissance littéraire et artistique* by French art critic and collector Philippe Burty. A translation of the article was published in England in 1875, defining Japonisme as "*the study of Japanese art and genius*".[776] Another key figure in the history of Japonisme was the German-born, later French art dealer, Samuel Siegfried Bing. He founded the magazine *Le Japon artistique* in 1888 and became the initiator and driving force behind Japonisme in France. (Based on the research of Hilda Horváth, we know that Bing corresponded with Jenő Radisics, director of the Hungarian Museum of Applied Arts, in 1888.)[777] France became a major center for Japanese art collecting in Europe. Samuel Siegfried Bing owned one of the largest European collections, consisting of over 50,000 woodblock prints. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, the Japanese merchant Tadamasa Hayashi brought 160,000 prints from Japan to France. French critics and collectors such as Philippe Burty and Edmond de Goncourt also assembled important collections and helped popularize Japanese art. In 1890, the École des Beaux-Arts exhibited 700 Japanese woodcuts, and in 1891, solo exhibitions of Hokusai, Hiroshige, and Utamaro were held. It should be pointed out that the establishment of private museums was important because these institutions played a key role in introducing and institutionalizing non-Western art in Europe. In late nineteenth-century France, several private collectors transformed their personal collections of Asian art into public museums. Émile Guimet, after government-supported travels to Japan, India, and China, assembled a major collection that led to the founding of the *Musée Guimet* in

[775] Papp Katalin: *A japonizmus megjelenéséről Európában és Magyarországon* In: Távoli fények, közelítő színek – A régi japán művészet és a modern látásmód, Szombathelyi Képtár, 2007.
[776] Philippe Burty: *Japonism*, The Academy, 1875. 08. 07., p. 150.
[777] Horváth Hilda: *Radisics Jenő és Samuel Bing levélváltása*. Művészettörténeti Értesítő, 1996/1-2, pp. 123-127.

Lyon, which was later relocated to Paris in 1889 at Place d'Iéna. The *Musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet* continues to operate in Paris as France's national museum of Asian art. Similarly, Henri Cernuschi, an Italian banker and collector who traveled to Japan, founded an Asian art museum next to Parc Monceau that opened in 1898 and is still open today as the *Musée Cernuschi*, housing one of Paris's most significant collections of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese art. A decade later, the collection of Clémence d'Ennery – much of it acquired from Siegfried Bing and Tadamasa Hayashi – was opened to the public at 59 Avenue Foch as the *Musée d'Ennery*, remaining an important historical collection managed as part of the *Guimet institution*. Curiosity and admiration for Japanese art became part of the zeitgeist and were reflected in the works of prominent artists.[778] Japonisme also manifested in painting: Japanese-style interiors, furniture, porcelain, and woodcuts gradually appeared in the genre paintings of English artists. Japanese woodcuts, with their decorative qualities and novel approach to spatial composition, influenced Impressionist portraits, such as Édouard Manet's portrait of Zola and Vincent van Gogh's painting of Father Tanguy. Japonisme impacted Art Nouveau furniture and jewelry: bamboo and reed furniture appeared on the market and quickly became essential elements in Art Nouveau interiors. The spread of Japonisme was facilitated primarily by a perceived crisis in Western European art, but commercial interests also played a role in promoting a generalized image of Japan, often imbued with stereotypes.

The first wave of British Japonism, beginning around 1863, included artists like Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Sandys, and James McNeill Whistler, who enthusiastically collected Japanese art but showed little interest in Japanese techniques. Another major collector was the English surgeon William Anderson, who taught in Japan for six years and amassed over 3,000 Japanese and Chinese paintings. In 1881, his collection was sold to the British Museum, becoming its first significant collection of Japanese paintings.[779] A later wave, influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement around the turn of the century, emphasized handcraft and woodblock printing, with figures like Frank

[778] Merklin Tímea*: Mit keres Európa keleten?* Vas Népe, 2007. március 24.
[779] Masako Yamamoto Maezaki: *Innovative Trading Strategies for Japanese Art Ikeda Seisuke, Yamanaka & Co. and their Overseas Branches (1870s–1930s)*. In: Bénédicte Savoy, Charlotte Guichard and Christine Howald (eds.): Acquiring Cultures Histories of World Art on Western Markets. De Gruyter Brill, 2019., p. 225.

Morley Fletcher advancing multi-block colour printing and influencing artists such as John Edgar Platt and Allan Seaby.[780] Parallel to its artistic popularity, interest in Japan was reflected in local exhibitions, such as the *Japanese Native Village* in Knightsbridge, London, held between 1885 and 1887. About one hundred Japanese men and women lived there while the exhibition showcased traditional Japanese buildings and daily life. It attracted over one million visitors, became a major cultural event in the city, and even served as a model for similar "native villages" elsewhere in Britain, resulting in largely uniform reproductions. Next to the "native villages", Japanese gardens also proved an effective carrier of Japan-inspired fashions in England, appearing not only on aristocratic estates but in public parks and tourist towns. While the wealthiest classes most often created elaborate gardens, public parks allowed broader audiences to experience Japanese-style horticulture. Although simpler than private gardens, these displays show that the Victorian fascination with Japan extended across all social classes.

The French and English were the most active in collecting, exhibiting, imitating, and incorporating Japanese motifs into their own art. The French approach to Japonisme, described as 'playful' and 'light-hearted', was largely influenced by the 17th-century genre of ukiyo-e and differed markedly from that of the English and Americans. Although many artists could view or collect original Japanese paintings and prints, reproductions played a major role in influencing what Continental European artists incorporated into their work. These reproductions highlighted flatness, simple lines, and bright colors, encouraging experimentation and hybridization rather than fidelity to Japanese techniques. This trend also reflected most French artists' limited firsthand experience of Japan and the scarcity of 19th-century French sources on Japanese materials, with etching and lithography – the primary media for reproducing Japanese art – being central to its dissemination.[781]

[780] Rebecca Capua: *Japonisme and Japanese works on paper: Cross cultural influences and hybrid materials*. In: Adapt & Evolve 2015: East Asian Materials and Techniques in Western Conservation. Proceedings from the International Conference of the Icon Book & Paper Group. London, The Institute of Conservation. 2017., p. 35.
[781] Rebecca Capua: *Japonisme and Japanese works on paper: Cross cultural influences and hybrid materials*. In: Adapt & Evolve 2015: East Asian Materials and Techniques in Western Conservation. Proceedings from the International Conference of the Icon Book & Paper Group. London, The Institute of Conservation. 2017., pp. 32–33.

As for America, collectors were not drawn to Edo-period woodblock prints – which were often considered vulgar – but preferred the art of earlier periods, regarded as more 'noble'.[782] The so-called "Japan Craze" in the United States developed later than in Europe, its rise delayed by the Civil War and stimulated by the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition. At the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Japan gained unprecedented recognition as the first Asian nation to exhibit in the international Palace of Fine Arts.[783] At the Chicago Fair, Japanese art made a strong impression on Americans, with architecture taking center stage and high-quality contemporary works showcased, in contrast to the earlier flood of low-quality exports. This emphasis on architecture aligned perfectly with Chicago's status as a hub of modern architectural innovation.[784] While Japanese craftsmanship was highly admired, attempts in fine arts were limited; Japan contributed mostly decorative arts, presenting few sculptures and paintings.[785] Guided by Kakuzō/Tenshin Okakura and Ernest Fenollosa, traditional works were framed and mounted in a hybrid Western style to meet public expectations,

[782] Kovács Ágnes: *A táncoló gésa – Adalékok Tornai Gyula japán tárgyú képeihez* – Magyarok Münchenben 6., Artmagazin, 2008/2, p. 56.; In 1882, Ernest Fenollosa, an American art historian and advisor in Japan, dismissed ukiyo-e as a vulgar, low-grade art popular only among the common people. See: 鵜殿篤: 明治IO年代の美術における国粋主義の検討. p. 61. https://meganeculture.boo.jp/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/article2013.pdf (accessed: 2025 Dec)

[783] Japan was among the first to accept the Chicago Fair invitation and invested over $630,000, one of the largest national contributions. See: Elizabeth H. Yusem Meyers: *Meiji Craft and Japonisme: The Japanese Exhibits at the Philadelphia and Chicago World's Fairs and the Structuring of American taste*. Thesis. Brooklyn, NY: Pratt Institute, 2013., p. 35.

[784] Elizabeth H. Yusem Meyers: *Meiji Craft and Japonisme: The Japanese Exhibits at the Philadelphia and Chicago World's Fairs and the Structuring of American taste*. Thesis. Brooklyn, NY: Pratt Institute, 2013., pp. 44-45.

[785] The 1893 Chicago Expo marked a turning point because it was the first international exhibition where Japan officially implemented a new policy that rejected displays designed mainly for Western taste and commercial appeal. Instead of continuing the earlier strategy – developed after the Vienna Expo – of presenting export-oriented, stylized objects and Western-influenced architecture, Japan focused on constructing a coherent narrative based on authentic, historically grounded Japanese cultural traditions. This shift signaled a move away from superficial popularity toward intentional self-representation and cultural authenticity in international exhibitions. Japan made significant efforts to secure a respected position for its fine arts. Previously, Japanese works like original water paintings had been excluded from recognition as fine art and were categorized as applied or "Oriental" art. Viewing this as detrimental to national pride and artistic development, Japanese organizers sent an officer to the U.S. in 1891 to negotiate with expo organizers for fairer treatment. The effort succeeded, and Japanese paintings, ceramics, and lacquerware were displayed alongside Western artworks, marking the first time Japan actively sought to elevate its art's international standing. Other factors also shaped Japanese participation: China largely boycotted the fair, removing a major competitor; American interest in Japanese art had grown; and U.S. manufacturers now competed with Japanese goods, meaning Japan could no longer present itself as it had in earlier exhibitions. See: Sano Mayuko: *Fighting 'the warfare of peacetime': Japan's quest for national narratives during the late nineteenth century.* In: Adelman, Jeremy, and Andreas Eckert (eds.): Narratives, Nations, and Other World Products in the Making of Global History. London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2024. pp. 75-76.; Elizabeth H. Yusem Meyers: *Meiji Craft and Japonisme: The Japanese Exhibits at the Philadelphia and Chicago World's Fairs and the Structuring of American Taste*. Thesis. Brooklyn, NY: Pratt Institute, 2013., p. 37.

allowing Japanese aesthetics to be recognized as fine art. Controversies arose over stereotypical displays, such as rickshaw pullers and geishas, which were protested by Japanese residents. Strategically, Japan balanced three goals: presenting its civilization on its own terms, engaging Western artistic standards, and satisfying Western exotic expectations. The exposition enhanced Japan's cultural prestige in the West, especially in America, reinforcing respect for its heritage more than its fine arts alone.[786] American artists approached Japanese art more individually, often drawing on firsthand experience in Japan and connections to major collections in New York and Boston. Unlike Europeans, they generally favored traditional Japanese painting. Notable figures included John La Farge, an early collector who extensively incorporated Japanese materials into his work; New York dealer Shugyō Hiromichi, who organized exhibitions and introduced Japanese prints and printing tools; and Boston's Arthur Wesley Dow, who advocated for Japanese aesthetics and the use of Japanese materials in artistic practice.[787] Other major collections were created by John Chandler Bancroft, William Sturgis Bigelow, Ernest Francisco Fenollosa, Charles Lang Freer, Henry O. Havemeyer, and Edward Sylvester Morse. Bigelow owned 4,000 Japanese paintings and more than 30,000 ukiyo-e prints, while Freer possessed over 2,000 works of art and more than 5,500 prints. Artist-collectors included Robert F. Blum, J. Alden Weir, and Samuel P. Isham, who owned 12,000 woodblock prints, including 4,000 by Hokusai alone.[788] Ernest Fenollosa, an American scholar, also amassed a large personal collection of Japanese art, which he later arranged to benefit the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. (While his efforts helped raise awareness of Japan's artistic heritage, critics argue that acquiring and exporting Japanese religious artworks to the West removed them from their original contexts.) Next to Fenollosa, Japanese art collections in the United States were significantly shaped by Edward Sylvester Morse and William Sturgis Bigelow. Morse, a biology and zoology professor at the University of Tokyo, collected Japanese ceramics that became part of the *Peabody Essex Museum* and the *Museum of Fine*

[786] Manuel Schilcher: *Invented Tradition*. pp. 70-71. https://www.academia.edu/39908757/Invented_Tradition (accessed: 2025 Dec.)
[787] Rebecca Capua: *Japonisme and Japanese works on paper: Cross cultural influences and hybrid materials*. In: Adapt & Evolve 2015: East Asian Materials and Techniques in Western Conservation. Proceedings from the International Conference of the Icon Book & Paper Group. London, The Institute of Conservation. 2017., pp. 39-40
[788] Leszek Sosnowski: *Objects and ideas. Japan and Europe in the nineteenth century*. In: MASKA 4 (36), 2017. p. 12.

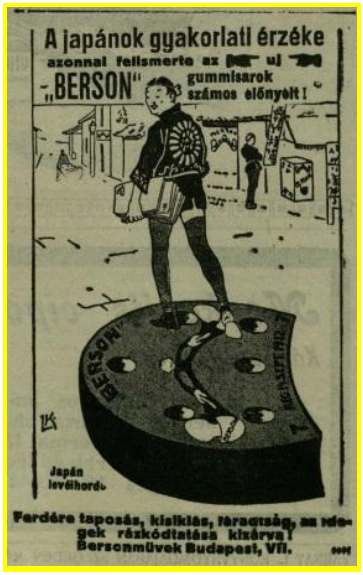
Arts in Boston, including a collection of 5,000 items catalogued in 1910. William Sturgis Bigelow, influenced by Japonisme in Paris, spent eight years in Japan starting in 1882, collecting a wide range of Japanese art – Buddhist statues, ukiyo-e prints, netsuke, sword guards, and Nō costumes – amassing over 50,000 items now housed at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. Together, their collections created an unparalleled repository of Japanese art outside Japan, and Bigelow also financially supported Kakuzō/Tenshin Okakura in establishing the *Japan Fine Art Academy (Nihon Bijutsuin)*. Besides the art market, another occurrence helped promote Japanese culture and goods in America. The 1885 U.S. debut of Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *The Mikado* became a major hit, and its popularity sparked a craze for *Mikado Clubs*, which not only served as social groups for young middle-class Americans but also encouraged the consumption of Japanese products.[789]

The activity of collecting is one of the most fascinating yet complex subjects of study, yet it has unfortunately not been examined in sufficient depth in art history. Studies of European collecting should pay greater attention to the interactions and collaborations among multiple individuals or institutions, shaped by their social, cultural, and institutional networks. Understanding the market for Japanese art requires examining the interactions between Japanese and foreign art market actors and collectors. Unfortunately, traditional collection studies tend to focus on biographical research on collectors, broad analyses, or descriptive categorization of collections and the European art market itself, often overlooking the contributions of agents in the objects' source countries. Ai Fukunaga notes that the incomplete understanding of the Meiji-era Japanese art market is partly due to scarce information on the Japanese domestic market for foreign buyers, with few records of private dealers' activities and sales. For example, hotels in Japan were among the agoras where Japanese art changed hands and deals were conducted. They served as social and diplomatic hubs where foreign guests, local politicians, entrepreneurs, and dealers could network. Japanese objects were exhibited and sold there, with local agents providing information. Hotels functioned as satellite marketplaces, allowing dealers to visit guest rooms and

[789] Elizabeth H. Yusem Meyers: *Meiji Craft and Japonisme: The Japanese Exhibits at the Philadelphia and Chicago World's Fairs and the Structuring of American Taste*. Thesis. Brooklyn, NY: Pratt Institute, 2013., p. 61.

sell directly to visitors, often with the assistance of interpreters and guides who helped bridge gaps and sometimes received dealers' rebates.[790]

An 'exotic Japan', filled with images of unfamiliar customs and aesthetic wonders, became a powerful tool for attracting readers. Contemporary newspapers and book publishers had a clear financial incentive to cultivate and reproduce this image.[791] In Hungary, the Japanese even appeared in newspaper advertisements, such as one for Berson rubber soles: "*The practical sense of the Japanese immediately recognized the many advantages of the new Berson rubber heel!*". Japanese-style decorative motifs became ubiquitous in everyday life, appearing on household objects, posters, ceramics, and even perfume bottles. Some Hungarian artists imitated Japanese writing and incorporated square or circular seals into their signatures.[792]



Berson rubber heel (newspaper advertisement from 1913)

Although France played a central role in Japonisme and the spread of 'Japan-fashions', its social and political historical contexts are often overlooked. Chae Ryung Kim notes that Japonisme occurred during the Second Empire (1851–1870), a

[790] Ai Fukunaga: *Tourism and Collecting in Kyoto: The Miyako Hotel as an Agent in the Creation of the Hon. Henry Marsham Collection of Japanese Art, Maidstone Museum, Kent*. In: Journal for Art Market Studies 3 (2018), pp. 1-5.
[791] Claudia Delank: *Das Imaginäre Japan in der Kunst. »Japanbilder« vom Jugendstil bis zum Bauhaus* Iudicum Verlag, München, 1996., p. 16.
[792] Gellér Katalin: *Japán és a Hold között – a japonizmus Magyarországon*. In: Gellér Katalin – Dénes Mirjam: *Japonizmus a magyar művészetben*, KOGART Budapest, 2017., p. 49.

period of rapid social and aesthetic transformation. A rising upper-middle class redefined taste and morality, shifting cultural authority from the aristocracy to bourgeois norms, while sociability moved from family and church to commercialized public spaces such as streets, cafés, and resorts. At the same time, Western artistic traditions faced a crisis in the patronage system. Small-scale, intimate works that complemented bourgeois interiors became the most popular, while private art education and independent exhibitions challenged state institutions. The lack of centralized control fostered aesthetic pluralism, where market demand rather than academic standards determined artistic value. Industrialization and capitalism turned art into a commodity, compelling artists to cultivate distinctive styles and personalities to attract buyers. This competitive environment created a demand for novelty and innovation. European artists, seeking fresh sources of inspiration, turned to non-Western traditions, with Japanese art providing a particularly rich and innovative resource. In many respects, Japonism(e) enthusiasts in Europe and the United States adopted a reactionary stance, seeking to resist the industrial influence on art.[793] This is also evident in the fact that by the late nineteenth century, academism[794] had become rigid and stifled new artistic ideas. European artists and critics found fresh inspiration in the artistic-commercial 'Japan fever', which disrupted established norms and unleashed creative energy. While many European artists still accepted academism as natural, others recognized its limitations and sought new intellectual and creative freedom beyond traditional frameworks.[795] Japonism(e) offered new forms, colors, and compositional strategies, a sense of otherness, and alternatives to Western illusionistic representation. Realists, Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, and Symbolists found in Japanese woodcuts a method to renew their art, reducing nature to decorative, two-dimensional patterns while opening new aesthetic perspectives. Although Japanese art became a primary source of innovation, Europeans often still regarded it as a supplement to their own artistic

[793] Rebecca Capua: *Japonisme and Japanese works on paper: Cross cultural influences and hybrid materials*. In *Adapt & Evolve 2015: East Asian Materials and Techniques in Western Conservation. Proceedings from the International Conference of the Icon Book & Paper Group*. London, The Institute of Conservation, 2017., p. 30.
[794] Academism was a European art style shaped by formal art academies, especially France's Académie des Beaux-Arts, emphasizing classical traditions, technical mastery, and idealized subjects – often blending Neoclassicism and Romanticism. It focused on historical, mythological, and allegorical themes.
[795] Leszek Sosnowski: *Objects and ideas. Japan and Europe in the nineteenth century.* In: MASKA 4 (36), 2017. p. 15.

traditions.[796] While the "*fertilizing revolution*" of Japonism(e) in Paris and London was already on the wane by the 1900s, it was just beginning to flourish in German-speaking areas. Art historian Katalin Papp summarized the spread of Japonism(e) in one of her works as follows:

> "*By the second half of the 19th century, it had become clear that the Greek-Renaissance tradition, which had been the main trend in European art, was in crisis, and the aesthetic values based on it had lost their validity. (…) The discovery of Japanese art also made it possible to approach image-making in a completely new way. By showing how to approach nature with pure reverence, it contributed to the liberation of art from its rigidity. Artists became receptive to bold, novel compositional solutions, and to the simplicity, decorativeness, linearity, and flatness characteristic of Japanese objects and representations. Thanks to this new approach and wealth of motifs, by the end of the century there was hardly a modern artist whose work could not be linked in some way to Japanese art. Of course, the Japanese influence was multifaceted. It had a different effect on the Impressionists in the early years than it did on the Post-Impressionists or on applied arts. While artists were initially inspired by novel compositional possibilities and different variations on the same theme, later on, greater emphasis was placed on decorativeness and the role of line. Applied art also provided a favorable example of the complex artistic ideal. In Japan, the sophistication of the minor arts rivaled that of the fine arts. It is therefore not surprising that among the representatives of the applied arts in Europe at the time we also find leading figures of Japonism (e.g., Van de Velde, Theodor Bindesboll, Gerhard Munthe, etc.)*."[797]

One of the first independent Hungarian publications devoted exclusively to Japanese art was the work of Ágost Zichy – who had visited Japan – published in 1879 under the title *Tanulmány a japáni művészetről (Study of Japanese Art)*. Beyond this book, the pages of contemporary Hungarian newspapers offer insight into how Japanese art was

[796] Chae Ryung Kim: *East Meets West: Japonisme in the discourse of colonialism in the development of modern art*. MA Thesis. UMI 2012. pp. 8-11.
[797] Papp Katalin: *A japonizmus megjelenéséről Európában és Magyarországon*. In: Távoli fények, közelítő színek – A régi japán művészet és a modern látásmód, Szombathelyi Képtár, 2007. Translated by the author

perceived in Hungary. First, let us consider an article published in 1905 in the journal *Magyar Iparművészet (Hungarian Applied Arts)*:

> "*At first glance, Japanese art seems strange to European eyes. This is because Japanese art cannot be viewed from the same perspective as our own art. Europe grew up with Greek and Roman culture, and the ancient masters always taught that the culmination and ultimate goal of artistic representation was to reproduce the forms of the human body. The Greeks' climatic and geographical conditions led them to live outdoors, as did the Japanese, yet they did not achieve a deeper harmony with nature; indeed, they almost completely excluded the depiction of natural objects based on observation from their art. Instead, they personified fire, trees, and rivers. Dryas, Pan, and Daphne represented the excellence of nature with human bodies. The lively scenes on Greek vases also deal only with people; animals rarely appear on them, and plants serve exclusively as ornamentation. This is different for the Japanese. (...) They also spend most of their time outdoors and, like the Greeks, 'become wise from walking and breathing fresh air'. (...) But their cultural sensibility is on a different track. Their art is not personifying, but rather cosmophilic. Nature never appears in human form, but rather natural objects become the carriers of human concepts. The peacock represents beauty, the turtle represents time, the heron represents freedom, and the pine tree represents long life. From their rich flower mythology, here are just two examples: the peach and cherry blossoms are symbols of youth, while the blue acacia with its sail-like petals is the flower of love and happiness. No other people understand the world around them as deeply as the Japanese. We tie flowers into bouquets and blend their colors together, while the Japanese place a single stem in a vase and find joy in that one individual flower. The Japanese have a wonderful talent for observation, which comes from their love and understanding of individual natural phenomena. Through a spider's web woven in the corner of a window, they paint the sunset with all the atmosphere of the evening. A hundred images of the sacred mountain, the extinct volcano, Mount Fuji, appear in a series without ever becoming boring. And since art is inseparable from industrial or applied arts, a*

bird's footprint becomes a fabric pattern, and a hiding lizard becomes a sword hilt. All these small themes are made diverse by the subtleties of observation. The Japanese artist draws the portrait of a particular stone, tree, or fish. He captures the spray of the sea foam, the movement of a bird in flight that we cannot see with the naked eye, but only with the help of a snapshot camera, since our art always gives only the result of movements. (...) In addition, the Japanese artist is able to reproduce what he has observed. He has a special tool for this: the brush. In Japan, everyone carries a brush with ink on their belt, where writing is also done by painting, and the image of words is a real ornament. In this way, the artist gains great practice, and his hand and tool become one. His nerve ends are not in his fingertips, but at the end of the fine-haired brush, which feels his move as he works. How crude and soulless are the European pen and pencil in comparison. When the Japanese brush throws dots, bold lines, and spots onto the paper with a single stroke, it becomes the painter's collaborator. The brush quickly conveys the thought, does not let any impression slip away, and preserves it vividly. This is why all Japanese works are so fresh, because the obedient tool follows the quick-witted observation. This is most evident in the flat patterns, which appear to be only thrown down, yet bring a piece of nature to life. The arrangement in a given space is always magnificent, even without symmetry. The detail does not overwhelm the whole, and there is never any transgression against the structure of nature."[798]

In 1910, György Bölöni, Hungarian writer, journalist, literary and art critic, reflected on the phenomenon of Japonisme in the following words:

"*Just as Baudelaire's nostalgia for the East and the Goncourt brothers' Japonism swept nervously, stormily, and feverishly across Europe, so too did Japanese art begin to be slurped up everywhere. (...) This aesthetic upheaval arrived in Hungary as a complete and serious cultural necessity.*"[799]

In 1911, he wrote:

[798] Czakó Elemér: *Az Iparművészeti Múzeum japán sablonjai*. Magyar Iparművészet, 1904. május, pp. 225-230. Translated by the author.
[799] Bölöni György: *Képek között*. Budapest, 1967, Szépirodalmi Japánok nálunk, pp. 138-139. Translated by the author.

"*At one time, people saw only the strange and bizarre in it and were attracted to its exoticism (...) In recent years, they have come to realize that Chinese paintings, Persian primitives, Japanese engravings, and Korean idol sculptures are just as much educators of art as, for example, the Greeks were.*"[800]

In 1938, Pál Nádai, Hungarian art writer, critic, educator, and aesthetician wrote the following about Japonism(e) in *Nyugat (West)* magazine:

"*It is a beautiful but exciting disease. It is mostly brought to Europe by ships from around the Pacific Ocean. Its first propagator was Marco Polo in the thirteenth century. This brave Venetian sailor showed his compatriots the wonders of the heavenly empire: the thick-walled, green-glazed Seladon porcelains. And he enchanted his friends who loved beautiful tableware. Since then, the breeze of East Asia has wafted over European tastes in almost every century. (...) The arts of the countries of the rising sun became known in the Old World only late, in the sixties of the last century. At first, this was only a private matter for all kinds of antique hunters.*"[801]

As regards the influence of Japonism(e) on Hungarian fine arts, Hungarian art historians distinguish two periods: the first encompasses the years Hungarian artists spent studying abroad or working outside Hungary (1868-1907), and the second spans 1908–1910, when Japonism(e) reached its peak in Hungary.[802] The influence of Japonism(e) on Hungarian art stemmed primarily from direct connections with Paris and from art collections exhibited by Hungarian collectors or brought back from Japan by Hungarian travelers. The first Hungarian art collection with an East Asian focus is associated with Gábor Fejérvári and Ferenc Pulszky. Fejérvári, Pulszky's uncle, was a traveler and art collector, while Pulszky – known as the 'cultural pope of the Dualist era' – achieved prominence as a politician, archaeologist, and art collector. Their activities were unique in Europe at the time. In their collection, which they had been developing since the 1840s and presented in several exhibitions and auctions, Chinese, Japanese,

[800] Bölöni György: *Képek között*. Budapest, 1967, Kelet művészete, pp. 236-238. Translated by the author.
[801] Nádai Pál: *Japán ízlés*. Nyugat, 1938, II. p. 431. Translated by the author.
[802] Gellér Katalin: *Japán és a Hold között – a japonizmus Magyarországon*. In: Gellér Katalin – Dénes Mirjam: *Japonizmus a magyar művészetben*, KOGART Budapest, 2017., p. 27.

and Indian objects were grouped together as a single large “Oriental” category rather than separated by origin. The Japanese items included bronze sculptures, ivory and wood carvings, and swords.[803]

At the first thematic exhibition on Japonism(e) in Hungary in 2016, the exhibition examined which branches of art Hungarian art historians had identified as being influenced by Japonism(e). Painting must be mentioned first and foremost, but this influence also appeared in the applied arts (furniture, everyday objects) and in textile art. The exhibition revealed that the earliest examples of Arita plate copies can be found among the faience of Holics (now: Holíč, Slovakia) from around 1750. A hundred years later, in 1859, Mór Fischer painted a Japanese bowl from 1750 and subsequently produced imitations (he had already won a first-class medal at the 1855 Paris World's Fair for his Japanese porcelain imitations). There was a Hungarian factory in Pest, founded by Ignác Fischer, which initially focused on decorating imported ceramics but began producing its own earthenware in 1867, featuring soft white tones and richly painted floral designs. In 1885, Emil Fischer, the founder’s son and lead decorator, presented a collection at the Hungarian National Exhibition in Budapest that incorporated Japanese-inspired ornamental motifs. Imitations of Arita and Imari porcelain produced in Herend began to appear in 1850; in addition to making copies, the Herend manufactory repaired original Japanese porcelain. (Their work was internationally recognized, winning the second-highest award at the 1855 Paris exhibition for its replicas of Asian ceramics.) There was a Japonism(e) boom at the Zsolnay factory between 1880 and 1890. From its beginnings, the Zsolnay ceramic factory showed a strong fascination with ‘Oriental’ ceramics and contemporary market trends, readily adopting elements of Japonisme. Vilmos Zsolnay assembled a study collection that featured Japanese blue-and-white porcelain, Arita ware, Satsuma pieces, and other modern Japanese ceramics. The establishment of a state-supported vocational school next to the factory in 1886 likely encouraged the acquisition of books on Japanese art for the factory library. Many designers at the factory worked from Japanese models, particularly katagami patterns. Júlia Zsolnay, drawing on research

[803] Bincsik Mónika: *Japán műtárgyak gyűjtéstörténete Magyarországon a 19. század második felében – kitekintéssel a nemzetközi összefüggésekre*. Phd thesis, 2009., ELTE, pp. 52-57.

conducted in the Zichy family collection and at the Austrian Museum for Art and Industry in Vienna, created designs incorporating lotus motifs, bird-and-flower themes, and scenes inspired by ukiyo-e prints. They used bright enamel colors and adopted 'Oriental' forms, including gourd-shaped vases, fan-shaped bowls, and drum-shaped stools, decorated in a Japanizing style. Between 1894 and 1896, Júlia and her sister Teréz adapted Japanese brocade patterns published in Le Japan Artistique, reinterpreting motifs such as chrysanthemums, butterflies, and waterfalls. Other artists, including József Rippl-Rónai, Lajos Mack, Mihály Nagy, and Sándor Apáti Abt, also contributed Japonisme-influenced works. Tádé Sikorski (Tadeusz Sikorski), the Polish-born architect and Júlia Zsolnay's husband, embraced Japanese ceramic forms and decorative elements such as lotus, bamboo, and carp motifs common in katagami designs. One of his ornamental sculptures combined Pre-Columbian subject matter with the humor and refined craftsmanship characteristic of Japanese netsuke. By 1900, Sikorski and Abt were producing dishes with elaborate rim decorations that evoked the pottery of Japan's Middle Jōmon period.[804] By integrating these Japanese principles with Central European ceramic traditions, the Zsolnay factory created a novel decorative language, introducing innovative geometric patterns, layouts, and surface treatments that helped make Japanese art accessible to a wider public.

The Hungarian glassworks in Zayugróc (now: Uhrovec, Slovakia), founded in 1874 by Josef Schreiber, drew on Czech glassmaking traditions and incorporated non-European influences. The factory specialized in polished lead glass for lighting, benefiting from the rise of kerosene, gas, and electric lamps. By the 1880s, orientalized motifs of birds, flowers, and insects, inspired by Japanese designs, appeared in local decor. István (Stefan) Sovanka, the lead designer from 1881 to 1904, integrated Japanese-inspired elements into his work and later created Art Nouveau patterns featuring geometric forms and exotic flowers. His designs were comparable in quality to those of Emil Galle and Czech designer Adolf Beckert.[805]

[804] Mirjam Dénes, Györgyi Fajcsák, Piotr Spławski, Toshio Watanabe: *Japonisme in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy*. Museum of Fine Arts–Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, 2020. p. 108.
[805] Mirjam Dénes, Györgyi Fajcsák, Piotr Spławski, Toshio Watanabe: *Japonisme in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy*. Museum of Fine Arts–Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, 2020. p. 188.

Beyond Japonism(e) in Hungarian applied arts, a commercial "Japan fever" also appeared in book illustrations and poster art. According to Katalin Gellér, posters were the genre that most effectively absorbed the decorative qualities of Japonism(e), which is why examples can be found in the work of almost every Hungarian poster artist of the period; the most characteristic among them are the works of Géza Faragó.[806]

Japonism(e) vs. Commercial Japan-Fever: Toward a Nuanced Understanding

Recently, art historians, riding the wave of new postmodern theories, have been trying to outbid one another in stretching the terminological and interpretative boundaries of Japonism(e) – efforts that only increase the confusion surrounding an already vague and imprecise concept.[807] Certain researchers – albeit cautiously and implicitly – conflate Japonism(e) with a broad, general Japanophilia, thereby generating misleading and flawed 'Japonism(e)-narratives'.[808] Additionally, art historians often use the term Japonism(e) as an umbrella concept, seeing it as a central point in a transmedial network that connects painting, photography, theater, cinema, and virtually every other art form.[809] In contrast to these taken-for-granted concepts and approaches, the author of these lines believes that Japonism(e) should be understood primarily as an *art-historical* phenomenon, a process that ultimately contributes to the creation of distinctively new genres, especially within the visual, applied, and fine arts. On the other hand, a *strictly interdisciplinary approach* should be adopted when examining the resulting or parallel phenomena of *Japan-fever, Japan-craze, and Japan-fashions* in commercial mass culture – that is, everything outside the visual, applied, and fine arts. Art history may continue to address the artistic techniques, patterns, styles, and

[806] Gellér Katalin: *Japán és a Hold között – a japonizmus Magyarországon*. In: Gellér Katalin – Dénes Mirjam: *Japonizmus a magyar művészetben*, KOGART Budapest, 2017., pp. 81-83.
[807] Undoubtedly, there exists a certain surreality in observing some art historians performing hermeneutic yoga in their postmodern ivory towers as they attempt to decide whether the latest manga, anime or 'kawaii culture' trends constitute the newest incarnation of officially approved de-masculinized "*Japonisme*" with a *silent "e"*; "*Japonism*"; neutralized "*Japanism*"; "*Japonnerie*" with one or two '*n*'s; or '*japonisme-with-a-lowercase-j-because-of-perceived-colonial-power-structures'*.
[808] Toshio Watanabe: *What is Japonisme? Terminology and Interpretation*, In: Collected Papers by Toshio Watanabe: Interpreting Japan - Sainsbury Institute Occasional Papers 1. edited by Christopher J. Hayes, Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures, 2020. pp. 83-95.
[809] Thomas LaMarre: *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009., xiv.

materials used by Japanese artists and adopted or copied by European artists, but it should definitely step back when its limited methods and tools are insufficient to interdisciplinarily deconstruct and analyze the commercial, consumer-centric, and profit-oriented activities born out of the Japan-craze of the period, especially because the real artistic value of most of these products was lower than their marketability and profit-making potential. From an art-historical perspective, Japonism(e) could be understood as a reference to an active creative process in which incorporation or high-quality imitation[810] plays an important role, ultimately culminating in a style that is not foreign to the receiving culture and creates a harmonious, fresh blend – a new, epoch-making artistic movement (Art Nouveau, Impressionism, Art Deco, Bauhaus, Jugendstil, etc.). In this case, an important triad can be observed: discovery, adoption, and reproduction. Even early in the discovery phase, it is clear that, although technically and stylistically different, Japanese artworks conveyed ideas that were both accessible and meaningful in the Western world. Paradoxically, instead of seeming foreign, these works impressed European and American audiences with more familiarity than might be expected, particularly regarding the concepts they embodied. In a fascinating 2017 public lecture, Sarah E. Thompson, curator of Japanese Prints at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston – a museum housing the largest collection of woodblock prints outside Japan, totaling a staggering 44,000 prints – pointed out that this familiarity stems from several adoptions by Japanese artists from the West: (1) the use of Western vanishing-point perspectives, which arrived in Japan in the 1740s and were then a novelty[811] (Hokusai, for example, took advantage of this); (2) the use of the color Berlin/Prussian blue; (3) shadows crafted skillfully by print masters of the time; (4) the adoption of overall Western styles; and (5) even the occasional use of images and

[810] Since importing from China and Japan was still very expensive in the 18th century, European manufacturers began to produce pieces imitating Chinese and Japanese porcelain, for example Wiener Porzellan-Manufaktur and Zsolnay. Peter Pantzer: *Viewing foreign countries, their peoples and cultures: What was the reason for Japonism in the West?* In: Civilization Special issue: Dialogue between Civilizations, September 2017., University of Bonn, p. 27.

[811] Traditional Asian perspective showed distant objects by placing them high on the picture plane. Impressionists were particularly drawn to the novel compositions of ukiyo-e, especially kinzō-gata-kōzu (近像型構図). In this style, objects in the foreground appear in extreme close-up, partially blocking the background, while the middle ground is often omitted, creating a dramatic two-layered composition. Although it differs from the linear perspective of Renaissance realism, kinzō-gata-kōzu was influenced by Renaissance perspective, which reached Japan through European engravings imported via China or the Dutch East India Company. Daisuke Miyao: *Japonisme and the birth of cinema*. Duke University Press, 2020., p. 24.

knowledge from translated or imported Western books.[812] In addition to these, we can mention the importance of (6) *dessin* (sketching with quick brushstrokes),[813] a technique highly valued in Europe since at least the 16th century for representing nature in painting. Dessin reappears in ukiyo-e woodblock prints, particularly in Hokusai's Manga, which drew Western attention for its skillful use in Japan. On the other hand, there are particular original characteristics of ukiyo-e that were adopted by Western artists. First, there is *à travers*, a mobile and flexible viewpoint that Monet employed. This technique guided the viewer's gaze across the entire visual field, sometimes even beyond the frame, allowing Monet to capture the fragmentary yet dynamic experience of modern urban spaces, such as crowded streets. Second, the *shidare* ("weeping form") compositional motif, adopted by Impressionists from ukiyo-e, can be mentioned. In this motif, branches of weeping willows or flowers droop in the foreground from the top of the frame – a device never used in European art before Monet.[814]

One of the more surprising legacies of ukiyo-e can be found in early European cinema. Daisuke Miyao has traced its influence in the Lumière brothers' films of 1895–1905. Out of 1,428 films he studied, thirty-three were shot in Japan by French cinematographers Constant Girel and Gabriel Veyre, depicting everyday life, landscapes, geisha, farmers, Ainu people, and some theatrical performances. Miyao shows that these films combined traditional Orientalist fantasies with transnational and transmedial engagement with Japanese art, especially ukiyo-e-inspired compositions and the concept of *à travers*. In this context, *à travers* refers to a compositional technique adopted from ukiyo-e prints and used by artists like Monet and Cézanne, emphasizing the contrast between foreground and background, mobilizing the viewer's gaze, and highlighting the transient, fleeting nature of vision. In the Lumière films, this technique was applied cinematically, creating what Miyao calls "*à travers cinema*", which framed Japanese landscapes and people aesthetically while also capturing movement and duration, making the subjects appear more vivid and present. Key figures in the making of these films were Japanese industrialist Katsutarō Inabata, a former classmate

[812] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46w-140Zf9E (accessed: 2025 Dec.)
[813] *Dessin* is a French term that literally means "drawing". In art history, it refers specifically to the skill of drawing as a foundational artistic practice, emphasizing line, form, and composition. It often involves quick, expressive sketches that capture the essential structure or movement of a subject.
[814] Daisuke Miyao: *Japonisme and the birth of cinema*. Duke University Press, 2020., p. 23.; 28.; 35-36.

of the Lumière brothers, and an anonymous geisha. Their significance lies in how they exemplify the active role of Japanese people in these films: Inabata facilitated access and cultural mediation for the cinematographers, while the geisha's presence shows how ordinary Japanese individuals participated in and shaped the cinematic representation of their culture. Miyao argues that Lumière motion pictures in Japan was not merely a one-sided Orientalist fantasy but a site of dialogue between French filmmakers and Japanese people.[815]

At the end of the 19th century, according to Gabriel P. Weisberg, Japanese art was "*seen as something that could liberate Europe from past conventions and worn-out artistic traditions*".[816] The seeds of Japonism(e) can be found primarily in early European art collections devoted to industrial art (partly intended to revitalize domestic production) and in the influence of world exhibitions, whose first notable manifestation was the so-called "*Japonaise-cult*". In Europe, the balance between the *decorative* arts and the *fine* arts shifted in the early 1900s, and the concepts of *Japonistic* and *decorative* became synonymous.[817] In Japan, Japanese crafts were traditionally viewed as practical objects rather than "fine art", a concept imported from the West during the Meiji period. Before Japan opened to foreign influence in 1854, art was valued for religious, decorative, or functional purposes, and items like woodblock prints – later prized in Europe – were considered cheap entertainment in Japan. When Western collectors began valuing these objects as fine art, Japanese traders recognized their economic potential. During international expositions, some Japanese officials sought to shape foreign perceptions of Japan and began producing explanatory materials to present the nation's culture, crafts, and society in a scholarly way. At the 1873 Vienna World's Fair, the Japanese became aware of Western hierarchies of visual culture, especially the

[815] Daisuke Miyao: *Japonisme and the birth of cinema*. Duke University Press, 2020., pp. 5-12.
[816] Gabriel P. Weisberg: *The Japonisme phenomenon*. In: Gabriel P. Weisberg, Anna-Maria von Bonsdorff & Hanne Salkokari (eds.), Japanomania in the Nordic countries, 1875–1918, Burges, 2016.
[817] The terminology for what we now call "*design*" and "*applied arts*" was fluid and inconsistent in the 19th century. In mid-19th-century Britain, terms like "*ornamental art*" and "*art industry*" were initially interchangeable, with "*art industry*" eventually becoming standard and later adopted in Austria and Germany. Translating it into German was complicated by overlapping terms such as *Industrie* and *Gewerbe*, producing variants like *Kunstindustrie* and *Kunstgewerbe*, each with slightly different meanings. Other terms, like *Hausindustrie* and *Hausfleiss*, referred to applied arts products in the context of national economic discourse. Similar inconsistencies appeared in other languages of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

elevated status of painting and sculpture as fine arts. This led the government to invest more heavily in developing these disciplines, which it termed bijutsu (美術).[818]

A key figure in Japan's artistic development was Ernest Fenollosa, an American scholar who became a leading authority on Western art theory in the country. His praise of Japonism(e) and critique of Western influence resonated with a nationalistic audience. He advocated for art schools, greater opportunities for Japanese-style painters, and teaching traditional brush painting in public schools. His lectures helped distinguish Western-style painting (yōga) from traditional Japanese painting (nihonga), with nihonga emerging as a term for contemporary works using traditional mediums. Fenollosa's ideas reinforced the role of tradition in both the production and administration of art in Japan. Another influential figure was Edoardo Chiossone (1833–1898), who directed the Engraving Division of the Printing Bureau in Tokyo from 1875. He introduced Western-style portraiture for official and diplomatic purposes, creating images of Emperor Meiji, statesmen, diplomats, and military officials, with his 1888 portrait of the emperor becoming the official representation. Chiossone also designed Japan's first modern banknotes (1876), official papers, and postage stamps, trained Japanese in printing techniques, and taught ink and paper production.[819]

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[818] The term *bijutsu* first appeared in an official Japanese government document in 1872. It was later adopted as the translation of "fine art" in the 1879 second edition of *An English-Japanese Dictionary of the Spoken Language*, compiled by Ernest Mason Satow and Masakata Ishibashi. Notably, the 1876 first edition of the dictionary left the Japanese equivalent for "fine art" blank, suggesting that bijutsu was not yet considered sufficiently established at that time. Even when the term was included in the 1879 edition, it was marked with an asterisk and labeled as an "elegant word" (雅言), indicating that *bijutsu* was still not widely used in everyday language in the late 1870s. Manuel Schilcher notes that at the 1873 Vienna World Exposition, Shigenobu Ōkuma and Tsunetami Sano faced challenges classifying Japanese works of art within Western exhibition categories. Previously, the often used Japanese word geijutsu (芸術) encompassed a broad range of skilled achievements, including moral behavior, music, calligraphy, and technical arts. The adoption of Western ideas shifted the focus from skill to beauty, separating craft from art and establishing a hierarchy between them. In order to meet the distinction between applied and fine arts – which did not previously exist in Japan – the term bijutsu was created for fine arts like painting, sculpture, music, and poetry, while applied arts became kōgei (工芸). This marked a shift from the Tokugawa view, where artistic production such as silk kimonos, lacquerware, and poetry was seen as a unified aesthetic practice, toward a Western-style separation of art forms and methods of collection, cataloguing, and display. See: Manuel Schilcher: *Japan debuts in the West: Historic World Fairs on Display.* (Edited abstract from doctoral Thesis "Appropriate Japan: How Western Art prepared a Nation for War", University of Art and Design Linz, 2019.), p. 4.; Hiroyuki Suzuki: *Introduction to the colloquium - Perspectives for the Future Study of East Asian Art History.* In: Hiroyuki Suzuki and Akira Akiyama (eds): Toward the Future: Museums and Art History in East Asia. Japanese Committee for CIHA, Comité International de l'Histoire de l'Art, and the Otsuka Museum of Art. Tokyo, 2020., p. 15.; Liliana Morais: *Traditional Japanese Arts and Crafts - Historical and Political Trajectories from the Meiji Period until Today*. In: 2019 Journal of International and Advanced Japanese Studies Vol. 11, March 2019, pp. 140.

[819] Manuel Schilcher: Invented Tradition. p. 54., 58. https://www.academia.edu/39908757/Invented_Tradition (accessed: 2025 Dec.)

To attract foreign buyers, the Japanese government issued a design guide (温知図録, 1875–1881) encouraging artisans to create export-friendly works that still drew on traditional motifs. Promotion of Japanese crafts in the early Meiji years was partly carried out through Kiryū/Kiritsu Kōshō Gaisha (起立工商会社), a semi-governmental company established to promote and export Japanese crafts – such as lacquerware, ceramics, and metalwork – to Western markets. It played a major role in Japan's early international trade and cultural representation after the Meiji Restoration. This aligned with Japan's longstanding view of art as practical and marketable, leading to a thriving export trade in crafted objects. As for porcelain, since the Meiji Restoration, modern Japanese export pieces were modeled on European ceramics seen at international expositions. Designs from that period are partly preserved in gachō (画帖) – collections of sketches sent to Japanese artists to guide painting, sometimes informed by designers who traveled to Europe and America to study local tastes. These designs were often modified during production, with Japanese painters exerting a strong influence on the finished pieces. While following Western styles, they retained Japanese craftsmanship and aesthetic sensibilities. A popular design was the "Dresden scattered floral pattern", featuring small flowers with gold trim scattered around a single larger, central flower. Flower motifs, including large realistic roses as well as violets, camellias, chrysanthemums, and morning glories, were painted in a Western decorative style rather than traditional Japanese techniques.[820] From 1885 to 1890, Japan briefly used trial exports of sample goods to test foreign markets after poor sales caused by low-quality exports. Agricultural products, crafts, and textiles were sent abroad, and the results were analyzed through follow-up market research. Data from these trials, along with information from world fairs and consulates, were widely published and distributed to businesses and officials, showing that Japan mainly relied on its own domestic expertise when deciding what to present and sell abroad.[821] Yet adapting art to Western tastes had unintended consequences. Some critics – both Japanese and foreign – felt that catering to export demand degraded the quality and authenticity of Japanese art.

[820] 井谷善恵「明治以降の近代輸出磁器―伝統と洋風化の狭間で」、『紀要』多摩大学グローバルスタディーズ学部グローバルスタディーズ学科、2009., pp. 46.; 49-52.; 54.
[821] Elizabeth H. Yusem Meyers: *Meiji Craft and Japonisme: The Japanese Exhibits at the Philadelphia and Chicago World's Fairs and the Structuring of American Taste*. Thesis. Brooklyn, NY: Pratt Institute, 2013., pp. 26-27.

Their critiques reflected Western expectations that “fine art” should be separate from everyday life and commerce, revealing a mismatch between Japanese artistic traditions and Western aesthetic ideals.[822] For instance, Japanese export porcelain[823] producers faced a dilemma between preserving tradition and embracing Westernization, but most ultimately recognized that survival required adopting Western styles and techniques, at least in design and production. A centralized design system in the Meiji ceramic industry proved outdated by 1900. Criticism at the Paris Exposition Universelle highlighted Japanese ceramics’ lack of progress compared to Western Art Nouveau styles, faulting them for weak surface decoration, poor vessel forms, confusion between ornament and function, and a misunderstanding of overseas demand for practical, functional wares. A distinct category of popular late 19th-century Japanese export wares, especially common dining and household utensils, became widely known among North American collectors as “Geisha Girl Porcelain”, depicting kimono-clad women, and occasionally men and children, in scenes of premodern Japan. This category was documented by Elyce Litts.[824] Among popular objects, the ‘Satsuma genre’ deserves mention for its landscape imagery, which transformed ceramics into informative portrayals of Japan.[825] These wares featured detailed scenes of daily life, landscapes, samurai heroes, and religious figures. Meiji-era pieces depicted elegantly dressed women, men working or relaxing, children, the Buddha, and deities in richly patterned, colorful attire. Such imagery allowed Western viewers to indulge in romanticized visions and nostalgic ideas of Japan. Satsuma’s great popularity shows the eagerness with which Japanese producers sought to cater to Western demand. They used colorful, gold-rich designs –

[822] Kawade Nanami: *Japonisme in Japan: the Japanese reaction to Japonisme as manifested in the art of Watanabe Seitei.* Aspectus (2). 220., pp. 1-4.
[823] There is a notable knowledge gap regarding Japanese porcelain: while high-end arts like Satsuma, cloisonné, and lacquerware are well documented, little connects these pieces to broader distribution networks, and information on consumer-oriented crafts – except Noritake – is scarce. Until the mid-19th century, major pottery centers in Nagoya (Seto), Kyoto (Satsuma), and Saga (Imari) exported mainly through Dutch merchants in Nagasaki. The opening of Yokohama port allowed producers to expand exports, often Satsuma-style wares, via branch offices in Yokohama and Tokyo. In the U.S., Japanese goods entered the market through foreign trading houses (gaishō), with A. A. Vantine & Co. in New York emerging as a leading importer from 1866 onward, and operating a six-story emporium by 1894. By the 1880s, New York was the center for Japanese crafts, carried by specialty retailers and major department stores, supported by a growing network of gaishō firms, which expanded from 33 in 1870 to 73 by 1895.
[824] Elyce Litts: *The Collector's Encyclopedia of Geisha Girl Porcelain*. Collectors Books, 1987.
[825] Clare Pollard: *Miyagawa Kōzan (1842 1916) and the Makuzu Workshop: The Development of Makuzu Ware in the Context of the Japanese Ceramics Industry of the Meiji Period*. Thesis submitted to the University of Oxford, 1996., p. 144.

such as peacocks, phoenixes, landscapes, and scenes from history and mythology – to match Western fantasies of the exotic, lavish 'Far East' prevalent at the time.[826] Yokohama played a central role in Japan's ceramic industry from the opening of the port in 1859 through the Meiji era. Unlike many export ceramics that were only decorated in Tokyo, late Yokohama ware was truly produced in Yokohama, with both painting and firing carried out locally. Although Yokohama ceramics were sometimes dismissed as "Hamamono" or "Hamayaki" – slang terms implying crude souvenirs made for foreigners – a close examination reveals the high quality of the hand-painted works. A major turning point came in 1871, when Kōzan Miyagawa established a kiln in Yokohama to produce export ceramics. Despite the lack of local clay, he secured materials through local support, developed a distinctive high-relief style, and became a leading figure in Yokohama ceramics. The early Yokohama export system relied on sourcing unfinished ceramics from traditional pottery regions such as Kutani and Seto, decorating them in Yokohama, and then shipping them overseas through foreign trading companies. This was remarkable because a newly developed city with no previous pottery tradition became an important center for ceramic painting and finishing. The value of the final product depended largely on the quality of the decoration and craftsmanship. Yokohama's foreign settlement and Japanese town became lined with pottery merchants, ceramic painters, and art dealers, especially along Honmachi-dori and Benten-dori. In 1899, merchants formed the Yokohama Pottery Merchants' Association, and by that time around 600 people were involved in the city's ceramics industry. In Yokohama, the price of the finished product after processing was usually two to three times the price of the raw material, although there were occasional finishes that were less than one-tenth of that price. Craftsmen were paid on a piece-rate basis, with an average daily wage of around 70 sen, and those with exceptional skills earning 90 sen or even 1 yen. Yokohama ceramics are distinguished by their exceptionally detailed painted decoration, with greater emphasis placed on painting than on vessel shape. Because ceramic bodies were supplied from other pottery regions in the early period, the forms were sometimes secondary to the elaborate surface decoration, and the

[826] Gisela Jahn: *Meiji Ceramics: The Art of Japanese Export Porcelain and Satsuma Ware 1868-1912*. Arnoldsche Art Publishers 2004. pp. 141-145.

shape and painting did not always harmonize. The designs are highly realistic and richly colored, commonly depicting Japanese landscapes, flowers, birds, figures, and Mount Fuji. Other popular subjects included historical figures, beautiful women, animals, and folklore. The paintings resemble fine art rather than decorative patterns, executed with extremely fine brushes and imported Western pigments to achieve remarkable precision. Reflecting Western demand, Yokohama workshops produced a wide range of export wares, including paired vases, decorative jars, framed porcelain plaques, tiles, and Western-style tea sets. Many porcelain tea wares were exceptionally thin and elegant but too fragile for practical use. Yokohama ceramics also combined Japanese and Western aesthetics, pairing traditional Japanese imagery with Western-style forms and elaborate gold geometric borders. Although these works were long dismissed in Japan as gaudy souvenirs for foreign buyers, they demonstrate extraordinary technical skill and craftsmanship that would be difficult to reproduce today. Many of the artisans had been trained during the Edo period in traditional crafts such as netsuke, sword fittings, wood carving, and ukiyo-e. As export markets expanded after the Meiji Restoration, they adapted these skills to ceramic decoration, producing works that reflected both commercial demands and remarkable artistic ingenuity. In recent decades, renewed research and the efforts of private collectors have led to a growing appreciation of Yokohama ceramics as an important part of Meiji-period export art.[827]

The market for Japanese objects across all price categories allowed Western artists, collectors, and the general public to participate equally in the Japonism(e) trend. Mass accessibility formed a bridge between the academic and the avant-garde, and even artists who were not modernists became part of the movement.[828] (In fact, between 1868 and 1913, it was arguably more difficult for an avant-garde artist to resist the appeal of Japanese art than to yield to it.) In both *art-historical Japonism(e)* and *commercial Japan-fever*, truths and half-truths about Japan and its culture have been mixed with improbable fictions. Between 1860 and 1900, Japan – both the country itself and the oriental fantasies surrounding it – entered the sphere of influence of modern European cultural life. For individuals seeking inspiration and guidance in an era of

[827] 『横浜・東京―明治の輸出陶磁器』2008, 神奈川県立歴史博物館, pp. 6-16.
[828] *Impressioni D'Oriente: Arte e collezionismo tra Europa e Giappone* - Dal 1 ottobre 2 febbraio 2020 MUDEC. Milano. Based on the text in the exhibition guide.

rapid change – or simply drawn to the 'exoticism of a far-off country' – Japanese art became a kind of obsession, eventually developing into a highly regarded aesthetic and artistic philosophy. Commercially driven Japan-fever had a significant impact on the cultural scene through literature, opera, and theater. Thanks to cross-pollination between the arts, traditionalists and avant-gardists alike began to discover Japan, resulting in a refreshing Japan-fever: a curious mixture of populism and elitism in the Western cultural sphere. Many viewed Japanese art as free from Western academic decadence and independent of its ruling patrons.[829] Being a follower of Japonism(e) – or of commercial Japan-fever – was seen as a form of freedom, and at times even as a kind of political radicalism. For many, commercial Japan-fever was nothing more than an exotic perfume that anyone could put on themselves very cheaply, or even for free. If we interpret Japonism(e) and the commercial "Japan fever" through contemporary concepts, we could say that Japan's participation in these fashion waves functioned as an early form of viral marketing – a 'growth hack' that hit two birds with one stone: promoting trade and enhancing the country's international image. The Japanese state controlled the production and visual exchange of arts and crafts to shape its image abroad, while the sale of 'oriental-style' handicrafts also provided an important source of capital. For Europe, various forms of 'Japan-fashions' became not only a kind of potency-enhancing influence but also as lucrative a business as it was for the Japanese themselves. Japan-fever can be considered as a crossover movement, which manifested itself in the works of many well-known European painters – especially among the Impressionists – as well as in the creations of Art Nouveau architects and designers. It also appeared in public spaces in the form of posters, postcards, and advertisements that drew heavily on Japanese styles, particularly the woodblock print tradition. The commercial Japan-craze extended into the homes of ordinary people, influencing furniture, ceramics, and decorative objects.

According to some postcolonialist perspectives, Japonism(e) helped justify and reinforce the West's colonization of the East. Therefore, although the early phase of Japonism(e) differs from the representation of North Africa, the Middle East, and other

[829] *Impressioni D'Oriente: Arte e collezionismo tra Europa e Giappone* - Dal 1 ottobre 2 febbraio 2020 MUDEC. Milano. Based on the text in the exhibition guide.

Asian regions, the postmodern perspective suggests that all cultures are ultimately positioned within a hierarchical relationship. In this view, Japonism(e) reveals the cultural hegemony of the West, as Japanese culture was at times depicted and perceived as merely a complement to European culture, and even as primitive. Some postmodernists reinforce the interpretation that Japanese art was subordinate to the Western artistic tradition and that its value lay solely in serving as an adjunct to it.[830] However, there is a serious problem with this idea: it overlooks the fact that, in the meantime, Japanese and Western actors in commerce, art, and government actively shaped Japan's reception and, at times, strategically adapted Japanese products to Western tastes. This was a form of self-orientalization – not in the sense of passive submission, but as a conscious engagement with external expectations, whether for market appeal or for cultural diplomacy during the Meiji period. In other words, it is not really possible to draw a clear line within the popular, discourse-shaping frameworks of postmodern deconstruction theories, where everything tends to be viewed exclusively through the monofocal lens of power relations, hegemony, and colonialism. When such theories apply rigid colonizer–colonized binaries to complex historical interactions like Japonism(e), they easily reduce nuanced and mutually influential cultural exchanges to oversimplified, black-and-white categories.

The most thorough analysis of commercial Japan-fever was conducted in a Swedish study that aimed to examine the representation of Japan in Swedish works of art. (Although it is framed as a discussion of the dissemination of *Japonism(e) in art history*, the author is in fact writing about the broader phenomenon of *commercial Japan-fevers*. This becomes clear when the author cites Stavenow-Hidemark's apt coinage, "*vulgar Japonism*", referring to the "*highly commercialized"* phenomenon in which craftsmen and artists adapted the 'Japanese style' to their "*merchandise"*.[831]) This study provides the most accurate overview of the commercial Japan-fever, with global implications and parallels. In the study, visual works depicting Japanese elements were collected from digital archives and databases, focusing on Swedish artists and creators

[830] Chae Ryung Kim: *East Meets West: Japonisme in the discourse of colonialism in the development of modern art*. MA Thesis. UMI 2012. p. 7., 17.
[831] Stavenow-Hidemark, Elisabet: *Japonismen i Sverige*. In: Bert Edström & Ingvar Svanberg (eds.): *Fjärrannära: Kontakten mellan Sverige och Japan genom tiderna*, Värnamo, 2001.

associated with Japonism(e), to assess what was depicted and how. Japanese elements – such as objects, clothing, people, and landscapes – were then analyzed using a visual methodology based on Jules David Prown's three-step method[832] for analyzing historical objects. By combining the main findings of this study with my own results, we can identify a set of main components that reflect what 'Japan' as a concept or metaphor embodied in the artistic and cultural spheres of the time: (1) Japan as a ***commercial commodity, status quo accessory/prop*** as well as ***inexpensive consumer item***; (2) Japan as ***feminine***, or Japan as a ***frivolous/playful entertainment***; (3) Japan as something ***distant and exotic***; (4) Japan as a ***reference point, commentary*** or a ***value-adding product label***;[833] (5) Japan as a ***model or good practice***; (6) Japan as ***fabrication or confabulation***; and (7) Japan as ***keepsake***.

First, let us examine the notion of '***Japan as a commercial commodity'***. In the Hungarian part of the Monarchy, a distinctly commercial Japan-fever developed across many areas of life. Almost anything could be sold more quickly and profitably with a 'Japanese' label at the time: rubber soles for shoes offered a different experience on the cobblestones of Pest if marketed as "*Japanese rubber soles*"; a 'japanned'[834] compost toilet seat provided a different quality of experience if sold as a "*Japanese toilet seat*"; a café in Pest or Arad instantly became more chic if called a '*Japanese café*'; hardly any household lacked a 'Japanese' silk kimono or a kimono-like garment; a painting by a Hungarian artist could command a much higher price if it depicted 'Japanese' women; and any theatrical play with a Japanese theme was virtually guaranteed to be a box-office hit – the list went on. To illustrate further how widely the label "Japan" was used at the time, we should take a look at contemporary advertisements, where we find

[832] Jules David Prown's three-step method – description, deduction, and speculation – helps interpret what an object communicates to its observer. Description examines the visible "internal evidence"; deduction explores connections between the object and people through intellectual and emotional responses; and speculation uses external evidence to understand the object's underlying meaning or purpose. Jules David Prown: *Mind in matter: An introduction to material culture theory and method.* In.: Winterhur Portfolio, 17:1. 1982., pp. 7-10.
[833] Hugo Ingemarsson: *To portray the beautiful, exotic and feminine land of cheap export - How Sweden imagined Japan during Japonism, from 1858 to 1914.* Master Thesis, Spring 2021 Uppsala University
[834] *Japanning* was a decorative technique that originated in 18th-century Europe, imitating Japanese lacquerwork to finish and ornament materials like wood, leather, tin, and papier-mâché.

"Japanese perfume"[835], "Japanese cosmetics"[836], an ointment called "Japanese Snow White" (Japán Hófehérke)[837], a telescopic "Japanese fishing rod"[838], a "Japanese soap"[839], an 'old Japanese home remedy' called "Tayfun tea bonbon"[840], and a "Japanese female remedy"[841]. The Japanese perfume was advertised as a "world sensation", introduced to the Budapest market for the first time in 1907. With its intoxicating and long-lasting scent, the perfume allegedly outperformed another product called "Illusions". It came in a special design and was sold by the deca, priced at 30 krajcár. Japanese cosmetics were available in 1912 in Budapest (89 Király Street). The "Japanese Snow White" ointment for skin ailments and frostbite was available at Lenz's Pharmacy (44 Család Street, Budapest) in 1912. The "Japanese collapsible fishing rod" was sold by Tódor Kertész at 1 Dorottya Street, Budapest in 1882 (another of Kertész's advertisements appeared in 1892, offering "Japanese parasols" starting at 80 krajcár[842]). The Japanese soap called "YO" was advertised as authentic and as having "miraculous effects" that all doctors marvelled at. The soap was produced using the "*extract of a plant native to Japan*" and was believed to have an "*amazing effect on baldness, sparse hair and beard growth, dandruff, hair loss*", etc. One piece cost 1 Krone and was available at József Török's Pharmacy, 12 Király Street and 26 Andrássy Avenue, Budapest. An advertisement from 1911 reports that 1,000,000 boxes of Tayfun tea bonbons – "*a time-tested Eastern remedy for centuries for coughs, congestion, and catarrh*" – had just arrived from Japan. One box cost 40 fillér. A 1907 advertisement offered something described as the "*safest and most comfortable female remedy*", with a 'Japanese' prefix. Doctors and teachers recommended it for women in poor health. One box contained 12 pieces, with instructions for use, for 2 korona. (L. Sommer, 23 Szondi Street, Budapest, was the exclusive distributor.)

[835] Pesti Hírlap, 1909-06-11
[836] Pesti Hírlap, 1912-12-14
[837] Pesti Hírlap, 1912-02-25
[838] A Hon, 1882-08-18
[839] Pesti Hírlap, 1907-06-02
[840] Pesti Napló, 1911-12-24
[841] Magyarország, 1907-10-15
[842] Ung, 1892-07-10

An advertisement for a "Japanese toilet seat" from 1905 (Mohács és Vidéke)[843]

In many cases, Japanese items were little more than ***bric-à-brac merchandise***, allowing even ordinary people to decorate their rooms with inexpensive Japanese fans, hang parasols from the ceiling, and display paper lanterns – even when the items were not of Japanese origin. From the 1870s onwards, numerous shops selling oriental goods opened across Europe and remained in operation for decades, demonstrating the marketability of "oriental" (Chinese and Japanese) merchandise. (Language played an important part in profiting from Western perceptions of East Asia: until the first half of the nineteenth century, high-quality ceramics and lacquerware were so distinctive that porcelain was called "*china*" and lacquerware "*japan*".) Japanese decorative arts such as fabrics, silks, lacquer, ceramics, and enamels were sold throughout European capitals.[844] In Paris, E. de Soye and his wife opened the shop *La Jonque Chinoise* in

[843] These were advertised as "completely odorless, self-operating peat-sprinkling toilet seats," a special type of peat-based sanitation equipment manufactured from around 1905 by two Budapest companies: the "Magyar Tőzegszóró-Closet-Ipar Betéti Társaság" and the "Guttman Lajos Kloset-gyár".

[844] One of the first Oriental-themed spaces of its kind in Europe was created in 1843 in Trieste by Adolf Wunsch, a Czech immigrant from Brno. On the first floor of his pastry shop, he established a "Chinese Cabinet" filled with objects from China, India, and Japan, including furniture, vases, ivory carvings, enamel works, and even a Chinese pagoda. The salon attracted widespread admiration, was featured in publications, and appeared in local guides from the 1850s onward. Among its notable visitors was Archduke Maximilian of Habsburg, who visited several times between 1852 and 1863. Fascinated by exotic art, he acquired pieces to decorate his residences, including the Castle of Miramare in Trieste, where he created Chinese and Japanese rooms. In Vienna, several shops and importers specialized in Japanese curios. The *Society of Japan*, located at Kärntner Straße 53 (from 1913, number 23) and owned by Hugo J. Biel, supplied a large number of distinctive Japanese costumes. Decorative items such as screens,

1862 near the Louvre at 220 rue de Rivoli, followed by other shops such as *À l'Empire Chinois* at 56 rue de Rivoli.[845] The most influential dealer was Siegfried Bing (1838–1905), a German-born art merchant who became the leading international promoter of Japanese art and a central figure in Japonisme. Operating initially from 19 rue Chauchat, he sold Japanese and Chinese artifacts, expanded in 1881 to 22 rue Provence, and opened two additional shops in the following years. The number of such venues in Paris grew rapidly, from five listed in 1869 to thirty-six a decade later. Parisian artists visited these stores, using Japanese goods as studio props, dressing models in kimonos, and collecting and copying ukiyo-e prints as sources of stylistic inspiration. In parallel, the Japanese government also encouraged exports by funding influential art dealers. A key figure in promoting Japonisme in Paris was Tadamasa Hayashi (林忠正, 1853–1906). After beginning in 1878 as an interpreter for Kiryū/Kiritsu Kōshō Gaisha (起立工商会社), he opened a boutique at 65 rue de la Victoire in Paris in 1890 and became a major Japanese art dealer. His shop served as a central meeting place for collectors, and by 1901 he had sold large numbers of ukiyo-e prints, illustrated books, and paintings (today, many ukiyo-e prints in European collections still bear marks showing they were sold by Hayashi). Hayashi traveled throughout Europe as an expert, identifying and classifying Japanese art in major collections.[846] (Hayashi's collection was dispersed through auctions held in Paris in 1902 and 1903.) Another Japanese dealer

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porcelain, paintings, tea, and fabrics were mainly provided by *Au Mikado*, the largest importer of Japanese, Chinese, and Indian goods in Austria-Hungary, which held the status of Imperial and Royal Court Supplier. Au Mikado was located at Schulerstraße 1–3, with a branch at Wollzeile 8, and was owned by the Jewish merchant Guglielmo (Wilhelm) Singer, who had been active as a trader in Trieste since at least the late 1870s. (The original "Au Mikado" opened in Trieste in 1887, but after G. Singer registered the same name there in 1891, the first owner renamed his shop "Au Vrai Mikado" to assert its authenticity. The two businesses publicly competed for customers, even advertising against each other in the press. Singer expanded to Vienna and later Budapest, though these ventures faced financial and legal difficulties, including bankruptcy and disputes over unauthorized use of the "Au Mikado" name.) Other leading businesses in Vienna dealing in Japanese goods included *Ichiban - Japanisches Depot*, owned by Mayer & Bohnen, and the court supplier Carl Trau. Additionally, Vienna had a place called *Maison Japonaise*, advertised as an elegant resting place featuring an indoor garden and rock bath, offering visitors a Japanese-style ambiance. In Prague, a *Zum Mikado* shop opened in 1889 under liquor merchant Josef Klein, importing Chinese and Japanese goods. The leading dealer, Vilem Stanek (1853–1893), ran the *Russian tea-shop* directly importing Chinese teas and claiming to be the largest importer in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Stanek showcased 'Oriental objects' in exhibitions and produced bamboo furniture and luxury items in-house, using techniques he or his brother learned in Japan. In Sweden in the 1880s and '90s, such trinkets could be purchased in stores such as *Japanska Magasinet* or *Sub Rosa* in Stockholm.

[845] Further reading: Elizabeth Emery: *Madame Desoye, "First Woman Importer" of Japanese Art in Nineteenth-Century Paris.* In: Journal of Japonisme 5 (2020) pp. 1-46.

[846] Manuel Schilcher: *Invented Tradition*. p. 30., 44. https://www.academia.edu/39908757/Invented_Tradition (accessed: 2025 Dec)

was Seisuke Ikeda (池田清助, 1839–1900), who began selling Japanese decorative arts to foreigners in Kobe. With a 50,000-yen government grant, he opened the Marukoshi Gumi branch in London in April 1881, at 14 Grafton Road, in partnership with Thomas Joseph Larkin, an Irish-born former telegraph engineer in Japan. Despite political and financial difficulties, the London shop – later located at 28 New Bond Street – operated until after 1893, mainly selling crafts such as metal inlay works and screens. Ikeda's son, Seisuke Ikeda II (1861–1918), returned to Japan in 1884 and later opened a gallery called *Bijutsukan* in Kyoto's Higashiyama district, serving both Japanese and foreign clients. After Seisuke Ikeda I's death in 1900, the business declined, and the family collection was eventually donated to Stanford University, where 216 items are now preserved at the Cantor Center for Visual Arts.[847]

We find many such stores in Budapest and other parts of the Kingdom of Hungary, too. One of the first of its kind in Budapest was *Café Vanek*, run by József Vanek, a former magician who performed internationally – including in Japan – and earned a fortune with his famous "decapitation" illusion. After retiring in 1878, he settled in the city and operated a stylish coffeehouse alongside a shop selling 'oriental' curiosities, offering items from tea boxes to swords and Japanese antiques, likely sourced through his son-in-law, Friedrich Wilhelm Retz, who lived in Japan and was married to Vanek's daughter. The café, which operated until the 1890s, featured Japanese-style décor with bamboo furniture. A newspaper notice informed readers in 1882 that Mr. Vanek, living at 3 Stáció Street, displayed his extensive private collection of Japanese objects sent by his son-in-law in Japan. The collection included lacquered boxes and cabinets with gold decoration, tea trays (15000 in stock), fans, mother-of-pearl items, jewelry cabinets, luxury furniture, cloisonné and Satsuma porcelain vases, and Japanese swords, all exhibited in a room on the first floor of his apartment.[848] An advertisement from 1888 shows that there was another shop (operated by A. Hottelmann) at 5 Koronaherceg Street in Budapest, where Satsuma ware, cloisonné, and other Japanese goods were on display.[849] In around 1895 we find

[847] Masako Yamamoto Maezaki: *Innovative Trading Strategies for Japanese Art: Ikeda Seisuke, Yamanaka & Co. and their Overseas Branches (1870s–1930s)*. In: Bénédicte Savoy, Charlotte Guichard and Christine Howald (eds.): Acquiring Cultures Histories of World Art on Western Markets. De Gruyter Brill, 2019., pp. 227-230.
[848] Magyarország és a Nagyvilág, 1882-10-15
[849] Vadász- és Versenylap, 1888-05-19.

August/Ágoston Gottschlig's shop, which sold tea alongside Chinese and Japanese goods, reflecting the strong commercial appeal of exotic branding at the time. The shop was advertised as a court supplier to Archduke Joseph and Prince Philip of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, as well as a wholesaler of tea, rum, and cognac. Gottschlig had several stores in Budapest: one, *"A Mandarinhoz" (The Mandarin)*, opened next to City Hall Square; another, titled *"A japán nőhöz" (The Japanese Lady)*, opened at the corner of IV. Egyetem Square and Egyetem Street.[850] The advertisement featured a Japanese female figure holding a cup of tea. Advertisements in Budapest's newspapers from the turn of the century reveal a new wave of store openings, including *Kotányi's Japanese import store (Kotányi japán behozatali áruháza)*. Miksa Rónai's *Japán Áruház (Japanese goods store)* appears in records as early as 1905 and was still operating in 1913.[851] In Pécs, we find the *Bazar de l'Orient* shop in 1905, offering large quantities of decorative items from Japan (including Satsuma coffee and mocha sets).[852] (The business was probably not the most lucrative, since in the same month another advertisement published by István Kállinger, 2 Király Street, stated that he had acquired a large quantity of Japanese weapons, embroideries, vases, and cloisonné items from the famous Bazar de L'Orient company and was selling them at reasonable prices.)[853]

[850] Nemzet, 1895-11-26
[851] *A budapesti és a környékbeli távbeszélő-hálózatok előfizetőinek és nyilvános állomásainak betűrendes névsora*, 1913. december; Magyarország, 1905-12-31.; Pesti Hírlap, 1907-03-27., 1907-05-16., 1907-12-29., 1909-12-11.
[852] Pécsi Közlöny, 1905-05-19.
[853] Pécsi Közlöny, 1905-05-11.

Price list with order form from the Fratelli Deisinger Coffee, Tea, and Rum Wholesalers in Fiume, circa 1900. (private collection)

Japanese goods were available on the Austro-Hungarian Riviera, at the prestigious resort and health-tourism center of Abbazia (now: Opatija), at Pension Gruber in 1907. The business, *Japanisches Warenhaus,* was operated by Leopold Rosental and offered direct import and export of Japanese and Chinese goods, accessories, and toys.[854] In the strategic port of Fiume (now: Rijeka), advertisements from 1907 reveal the presence of three shops specializing in East Asian goods. Sándor Szekulesz operated two stores, located at Via Alessandrina 1 and Riva Szapáry 4, importing goods from Japan and China and advertising himself as "*the first and only importer in this field*". He was

[854] Kur- und Bade-Zeitung der österreichischen Riviera. 1907. Aug. 24. Nr. 52, p. 8.

engaged in both wholesale and retail trade. A competing business was also advertised in the same newspaper. C. Oberdorfer, whose store was located on Fiume's prestigious Corso, sold Japanese and Chinese decorative and household articles and directly imported tea and silk goods. He maintained contacts with agencies in Kobe and Yokohama.[855] In reality, being a curio dealer in Fiume was not all fun and games. Merchants in Fiume complained in 1904 that crew members of Austrian Lloyd steamships were importing goods from Japan and China and selling them locally at low prices while in port, creating unfair competition. Although local merchants sought intervention from the shipping company and government authorities, the practice was defended as a legal privilege under maritime law, and the dispute was eventually taken to court, with the outcome unknown.[856]

The use of bric-à-brac is clearly visible in European paintings, where it often appears as the most recurring Japanese element in portraits and other works by certain artists. Bric-à-brac served as interior decoration, functioning as props and accessories, often primarily for women. In many works of art, figures hold Japanese fans or umbrellas, reflecting how this type of bric-à-brac became fashionable among European women as early as the late 1800s. By the 1900s, a few easily identifiable Japanese objects had become established fashion accessories in Europe. The process of transforming Japanese goods into commodities was not neutral in terms of value judgment. Bric-à-brac was often associated with the simpler, more vulgar pleasures of Japan's commercial consumption and was sometimes even referred to as kitsch.[857]

The European image of Japan can be understood as a feminine one, as seen in the notion of '***Japan as feminine***'. The consumption and appropriation of increasingly popular Japanese art often intersected with nineteenth-century gender concepts. It is indisputable that when artists – mostly men – depicted women, they were influenced by Japanese aesthetics as something distinctly feminine. Beautiful Japanese objects enhanced the appearance of women in portraits. One further point deserves mention,

[855] Honi Ipar, 1907. By 1913, Sándor Szekulesz, described as a "dealer in Japanese decorative arts", was conducting business in Budapest's VIII District. See: Központi Értesítő, 1913. 93. sz., p. 2678.; Budapesti Lakcímjegyzék, 1914., p. 809.
[856] Honi Ipar, 1908-01-15.
[857] Hugo Ingemarsson: *To portray the beautiful, exotic and feminine land of cheap export - How Sweden imagined Japan during Japonism, from 1858 to 1914.* Master Thesis, Spring 2021 Uppsala University, pp. 26-28.; 38-40.

though it is rarely discussed even in European art history: the close similarity between the commercial Japan-fever and the “Parisienne style”. The consumption of ‘*Japanese things*’ became primarily a feature of the European female sphere, an ideal closely linked to the fashionable *Parisienne*.[858] Paris, the heart of fashion and art in the late 1800s, was a center where women’s lifestyle, consumption, and even sexual freedom were particularly visible, making their engagement with Japanese goods especially striking. European salon art often featured Japanese goods as women’s accessories, reflecting the French ideal of female consumption. These goods were primarily available in Paris before spreading across the European continent. As a result, Japan’s image became increasingly associated with France and with female beauty. Consequently, the relationship between “Japanese things” and women can be viewed as an anachronistic Francophile phenomenon.[859] On top of this, Japan was often sexualized in Western imagination since the 18th century. Writers and visitors framed it as an exotic land of erotic promise, placing it within the broader orientalist framework that eroticized the “Other” through colonial perspectives. The use of the kimono in this context deserves emphasis here, as it was often perceived as sexually suggestive, even likened to a negligée. Merely depicting a woman in an 'oriental' setting conveyed sensuality, placing women in the imagery under subtle or explicit sexualized tension.[860]

The notion of ‘***Japan as a frivolous/playful (social) entertainment***’ can be seen in music (for example, operettas and couplet songs, to be discussed later) and on the rare occasions when Europeans adopted Japanese-sounding names. Adopting Japan-inspired names was uncommon in mainstream European society and was usually done for purely aesthetic or salon-style reasons. A notable Central European example is Feliks “Manggha” Jasieński (1861–1929), a Polish art critic, collector, and cultural influencer. A leading figure of japonisme in the region, Jasieński amassed one of Europe’s largest collections of Japanese art, including thousands of ukiyo-e prints. He adopted the pseudonym “Manggha”, drawn from Hokusai’s Manga sketchbooks,

[858] In the 19th century, a “*Parisienne*” referred to a woman from Paris but also symbolized fashion, sophistication, and modern urban femininity. She was seen as a trendsetter in style and manners, often idealized in literature, art, and journalism as stylish, independent, and socially savvy, in contrast to provincial or rural women.
[859] Hugo Ingemarsson: *To portray the beautiful, exotic and feminine land of cheap export - How Sweden imagined Japan during Japonism, from 1858 to 1914.* Master Thesis, Spring 2021 Uppsala University, pp. 40-41.
[860] Hugo Ingemarsson: *To portray the beautiful, exotic and feminine land of cheap export - How Sweden imagined Japan during Japonism, from 1858 to 1914.* Master Thesis, Spring 2021 Uppsala University, p. 45.

reflecting his admiration for Japanese aesthetics. The name first appeared publicly in his 1901 book *Manggha - Promenades à travers le monde, l'art et les idées*. He later donated his collection to the *National Museum* in Kraków, forming the foundation for the *Manggha Museum of Japanese Art and Technology*. The other example is from Hungary. Mrs. György Bölöni (Ottília Márkus) was given the playful name "Itóka" in the early 1900s. (This "name" is a wordplay: first, it plays on the Japanese family name "Itō" with the diminutive suffix "-ka", the English equivalent of adding "-y" or "-ie"; second, it refers to "booze" in Hungarian.) The name "Itóka" was created by Endre Ady, a famous Hungarian poet and writer and a friend of Ottília Márkus, by reversing her nickname "Otty" and adding a diminutive suffix. It was partly an homage to her trip to Japan and partly a reference to "Marquis Itō" (a leading figure in the modernization of Japan during the Meiji period), despite the historical and gender inaccuracy (Itō being a Japanese family name, not a first name, and the marquis being male). The other meaning referred to her drinking habits.[861]

Japan, as something '***distant and exotic***' appears in many genres across art and literature, but journalism captured this image particularly effectively, as can be seen in an article by Endre Ady, a Hungarian poet and journalist:

> "*Sometimes I just want to throw myself out into the world, sail the seas on my own yacht, see the Papuans up close, or wander around, sleeping under huts with wild Bedouins. I would also like to see the wondrous Japan before my life falls asleep…*"[862]

Hugo Ingemarsson notes that most artists tended to portray Japanese subjects within a European context rather than in purely Japanese settings. Only a smaller portion of works presented a more direct view of the country, unmediated by European influence. These depictions often reflect Western exoticization and the idea of "old Japan", portraying the country as distant, mysterious, and unfamiliar. Broadly, these images can be grouped into three categories: (1) imagined Japanese landscapes and nature, (2) representations of the Japanese people, and (3) Japan depicted in contrast to the West. Scholars argue that European artists and intellectuals often depicted other cultures –

[861] Bölöni György: *Az igazi Ady*. Szikra Kiadás, Budapest, 1947. p. 82.
[862] *Ady Endre Publicisztikai írásai*, Budapest., Szépirodalmi, 1977, I/288. Translated by the author.

including Japan – as exotic, barbaric, or overtly sexual to contrast European values, reinforce their own norms, or subtly express repressed desires, with foreign traits serving as a socially acceptable outlet for themes that might be taboo at home.[863]

Regarding '***Japan as a reference point, commentary, or value-adding label***', Japanese items were incorporated into artistic interiors, where they appeared as objects of the European bourgeoisie and thus carried social significance. Japanese objects were particularly sought after by the European upper middle class as interior design elements and were often used as decorations in bourgeois homes. By the early 1900s, Japanese exoticism had become an almost indispensable feature of popular middle-class furnishings. Japanese influence is evident in accessories such as hairpins and in the use of the kimono, which had by then become fashionable in Europe. Wearing kimonos (or self-made, kimono-inspired garments) was popular both at elegant European balls and events as well as at home; unsurprisingly, painters often chose kimonos when portraying beautiful European women. Thus, the "Japanese look" served to enhance the beauty or taste of European women and also provided a colorful contrast to ordinary local fashion. According to Manuel Schilcher, by the 1870s, European and American fashion designers and their clients were increasingly familiar with and admired Japanese motifs. While women's everyday modern dress remained stiff and restrictive, kimonos became acceptable in private or informal settings, such as at home, matinees, costume balls, and Japanese-themed performances. The popularity of kimonos was boosted by productions like Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* (1885) in London and Pierre Loti's *Madame Chrysanthème* (1887) in Paris. Western women came to associate kimonos with ease, comfort, and fashionable exoticism, leading to their adoption as dressing gowns.[864] Over time, at-home garments evolved toward

[863] Hugo Ingemarsson: *To portray the beautiful, exotic and feminine land of cheap export - How Sweden imagined Japan during Japonism, from 1858 to 1914*. Master Thesis, 2021. Uppsala University, p. 50., 56.

[864] The kimono's appeal lay not only in its aesthetic patterns and exotic beauty but also in its functionality and comfort. Unlike Western women's fashion of the 1870s, which relied on tightly corseted hourglass dresses that aimed for extremely narrow waists of around 17 inches (42.5 cm) and often compressed internal organs, restricted breathing, weakened muscles, and caused circulation problems, the kimono offered a radically different approach to dress. It is constructed from a single piece of fabric wrapped around the body and secured with an obi, minimizing waste, allowing for recycling, and emphasizing textile design and draping rather than the body's silhouette. Its loose structure provided freedom of movement and made kimono-style indoor garments an attractive and elegant alternative to restrictive Western clothing, influencing later movements toward more relaxed and practical dress styles. 坂本 佳鶴恵「きもの」はなぜ西洋に影響を与えたか一和のファッションの機能性をめぐって」In: 感性工学 = Journal of Japan Society of Kansei Engineering 16 (1), 2018., pp. 34-35.

greater comfort, often incorporating Japanese motifs either directly or through design adaptations by couturiers, and the kimono became an indispensable accessory in the wardrobes of the most fashionable society women. French couturier Paul Poiret (1879–1944) began incorporating kimono-like elements into Western fashion in 1903. Three years later, he unveiled a groundbreaking design that broke away from the tightly corseted, contoured silhouettes that had dominated since the Renaissance, favouring straight lines and a flat construction. Poiret's innovations had a lasting impact on fashion, anticipating the styles that would define the next decade. By the early 20th century, these styles became widely recognized as fashion magazines showcased loose-fitting, corset-free garments. From around 1905, French publications advertised Japanese-style dressing gowns like nagajuban (長襦袢) as elegant at-home wear for upper-class women.[865] This fashion spread to Hungary as well. In 1901, the painter Aladár Körösfői-Kriesch painted the Hungarian writer Renée Erdős wearing a kimono.[866] Alongside shifting fashion tastes in Europe, a comparable transformation in kimono design was unfolding in Japan. After Japan's victory in the 1895 Sino-Japanese War, Tokyo fashion changed significantly. Men increasingly adopted Western-style clothing, while women continued wearing kimonos. At the same time, kimono aesthetics shifted from prewar sober, muted tones with delicate, subtle patterns to postwar styles dominated by darker, more intense colours and bolder, more conspicuous designs, supported by new Western-imported dyes that expanded the colour palette. This change was closely tied to a heightened national mood of confidence and triumph after the war. Notable kimono shops capitalized on this atmosphere, marketing luxurious kimonos to urban bourgeois women as expressions of prosperity and national pride. This commercial and cultural shift contributed to the construction of the kimono as a symbolic "national dress" in modern Japan. More broadly, this process reflected a gendered division of national identity: women were increasingly positioned as carriers of

[865] Manuel Schilcher: *Inventing the Kimono - Ways the West created a Japanese tradition*. Atelier Furusato, pp. 16-17. http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16507.94248

[866] Gellér Katalin: *Japán és a Hold között – a japonizmus Magyarországon*. In: Gellér Katalin – Dénes Mirjam: *Japonizmus a magyar művészetben*, KOGART Budapest, 2017., pp. 59-63.

tradition and national symbolism through dress, while men were directed toward participation in modern, Western-oriented public life.[867]

The ***commercial value*** of Japanese influence in the West is evident on many levels. Since the 18th century, the European ceramics industry had produced numerous Asian-inspired products, a trend that continued during the Japonism(e) and commercial Japan-fever period. Many ceramic items were named after Japan or Japanese cities, even when they did not directly depict the country. The popularity of the operetta *The Mikado* – performed in at least twenty-two cities across the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the late 1880s – sparked a wide range of opportunistic marketing uses of the word "Mikado" in the Hungarian Kingdom. Products such as "Mikado fur", "Mikado trousers", and "Mikado stockings" appeared in advertisements, along with promotional items such as Mikado fans, perfume, and soap.[868] One retailer sold "Mikado hats" and "Mikado canes", sometimes accompanied by special "Mikado novelties" for loyal customers.[869] The name also appeared in "Mikado" bed-and-breakfast rooms in central Budapest,[870] a "Mikado evening" was held at the Vigadó Concert Hall's spring carnival in 1887,[871] and Count Kálmán Széchenyi even named his racehorse Mikado.[872] In 1889, the Hungarian weekly illustrated fashion and society magazine *Magyar Bazár* announced that its subscribers would receive an ornate Japanese lampshade as a New Year's gift with the issue. These examples clearly illustrate how merchants deliberately boosted sales by using Japanese names and objects, skillfully exploiting associations with Japan. Such exotic connotations played a central role in their marketing strategies.[873]

Japan as a '***model or good practice***' was a recurring point of reference in Europe's latecomer countries at the time. Although in Hungary, it never fully materialized and existed mostly on paper, it was intended to be applied around the time of the establishment of Hungarian national museums and industrial arts reforms. The idea was to learn from the techniques and materials used in foreign folk art and Japanese

[867] Kojima, Kaoru: The Image of Woman as a National Icon in Modern Japanese Art: 1890s-1930s. PhD thesis, University of the Arts London, 2006., pp. 65-68.
[868] Budapesti Hirlap, 1886. December 12., Fővárosi Lapok 1887. Augusztus 20.
[869] Budapesti Hirlap, 1887 Március 18.
[870] Budapesti Hirlap, 1886 December 2.
[871] Budapesti Hirlap, 1887 Március 6.
[872] Vadász- és Versenylap, 1886 Szeptember 16.
[873] Hugo Ingemarsson: *To portray the beautiful, exotic and feminine land of cheap export - How Sweden imagined Japan during Japonism, from 1858 to 1914.* Master Thesis, Spring 2021 Uppsala University, p. 30-32.; 37.

domestic craft industry, but the imagined technical reforms based on Japanese folk art products never came to fruition. Another example, though not related to art history, was the adoption of judo in public education; in this case, the results were somewhat more visible.

In Hungarian literature, particularly in journalism, we find many stories that fall into the category of '***Japan as fabrication or confabulation***'. The words "Japan" or "Japanese" sometimes hinted at something mildly sensational yet plausible – a story with hints of reality. Authors of this type of literature imagined stories set in Japan, or protagonists living or traveling there. Interestingly, there were very few long-form non-fiction stories or novels, and no fictional travelogues set in Japan – for some reason, these were not popular in Hungary. Instead, short stories and light readings appeared in the columns of newspapers across various sections. There are several examples from Hungarian newspaper articles of the time that point to the existence of a particular genre, which could be described as "biographical fiction", "fictional biography", or "biofiction", featuring Japan in some way. In these short stories, the protagonist is typically a poor vagabond (or swindler/conman) who becomes wealthy, somehow makes his way to Japan, then falls back into poverty, returns to Hungary or Europe, and dies destitute. There are two main types of these stories: **(1)** real person – fictional story; **(2)** fictional person – fictional story. First, let us look at the real person–fictional story **(1)** combination. The earliest story is that of András Jelky. Although it is often claimed in Hungarian travel history that Jelky led an official Dutch delegation to Japan in the 1770s, no evidence supports this assertion. The original 1779 report describing his mission is brief and unreliable, and later quotations contain inaccuracies. Archival records show that Jelky – listed in Dutch service as Jan Andries Jelleke – worked for the Dutch East India Company (VOC) between 1756 and 1776, traveling between Batavia and Europe. However, his name does not appear on any passenger lists of ships traveling from Batavia to Japan. Moreover, as a Hungarian ("from the city of Baja in Hungary"), he would not have been permitted to stay at the Dutch trading post in Dejima, which was restricted to Dutch nationals. Based on these, it is extremely unlikely that Jelky ever visited Japan, whether on a diplomatic mission or for any other reason, in the second half of the eighteenth century. While the myth has been debunked by one

Hungarian Nederlandist, some Hungarian geographers, Japanologists, and historians continue to buy into the story.[874] The second story is about Alajos Keszthelyi, an adventurous Hungarian actor who became well known in Transdanubia in the 1870s. According to press accounts, while serving in the army, he heroically stopped runaway horses in Vienna and was rewarded by a woman calling herself Lady Sayton, who hired him as her secretary. They allegedly traveled through Europe, India, China, and Japan. However, in San Francisco, the woman was exposed as Eleonora Price, a maid who had embezzled a large sum of money from an American millionaire. After her arrest, Keszthelyi separated from her and led a restless life, working various jobs – including porter, waiter, factory worker, circus clown, gold prospector in New Zealand, and even chimney sweep. His colorful story was reported in Hungarian, Austrian, and American newspapers, blending adventure with scandal.[875] The third story is about Nándor Sterk, born in 1876 in Perjámos (now: Periam, Romania), a notorious Hungarian conman known for his many disguises, including posing as a Bedouin chief and an elderly Chinese man. Moving to Budapest at age 22, he quickly embarked on a criminal career, using at least ten aliases across Europe and beyond. Sterk famously posed as artists – first as Ágoston Kovács, a miniature painter, and later as János Lábay – despite never having painted, defrauding art patrons of large sums. He reportedly continued his schemes in China and Japan, living a life of luxury funded by his frauds.[876] We continue with the story of Emil Babó, a representative from Szeged who was notorious for his skill at card cheating. After being caught at a casino, he vanished, becoming a legendary and mysterious figure. Stories claimed he traveled widely – from "*diamond fields to the Russo-Japanese War*" – and was unable to return home during World War I. His exact activities and fate remained unknown. One account suggested that Babó had become a Japanese captain and instructor for the Tokyo bodyguard corps. His name and exploits contributed to his legendary status as a daring, globe-trotting figure.[877] The last story in this genre is about Béla Pongrátz, a journalist and poet who

[874] Pusztai Gábor: *Nagaszaki emberünk - Jelky András elképzelt diplomáciai útja Japánba*. In: Bárány Attila, Pusztai Gábor: Diplomata írók – író diplomaták. Debrecen, 2018., pp. 53., 72-74.
[875] Színészeti Közlöny, 1882. 48. Szám., Debreceni Ellenőr 1882. nov. 20., The Mercury, 12. Febr. 1883.
[876] https://www.ujsagmuzeum.hu/sterk-nandor (accessed: 2026 Feb.)
[877] Sz. Szigethy Vilmos: *A régi Szegedből az újba*. Délmagyarország Hírlap- és Nyomdavállalat RT. pp. 300-304.; Debreceni Független Újság, 1904.05.17.

appeared fictionally as Béla Bonifácz in Gyula Krúdy's novel *A vörös postakocsi (The Red Mail Coach)*. According to the story, in the early 1900s he set out with two girls under his guardianship, forming the "Magyar Dal" (Hungarian Song) troupe and traveling eastward, performing Hungarian songs and dances to finance their journey. They reportedly reached as far as the Chinese border – some accounts even claim Japan – before returning to Hungary after six difficult years abroad, during which they were robbed and lived in hardship. In reality, Pongrátz was known mainly for a widely publicized lese-majesty case, for which he served nine months in prison. After his release in 1885, he worked for several newspapers but lived in poverty without a permanent home. Described as an eccentric, unkempt figure who bore his fate with humility, he died destitute of tuberculosis in 1910 in Budapest. There were rumours that the girls had been exploited to finance the journey, an allegation that Pongrátz denied.[878]

As for genre **(2)** (fictional character–fictional story), one example is the story of József Mauthner, a fictional character created by writer János Fröhlich. Portrayed as a Hungarian wool merchant born in 1841, Mauthner supposedly became a millionaire in America in the 1870s, traveled to Japan in 1879, and returned home in 1900. Fröhlich crafted the story to seem plausible, but research finds no evidence of a real person matching these details; his name does not appear in historical records or Hungarian textile industry archives.[879] Another story was written by Géza Szilágyi in 1912 about a fictitious Hungarian writer named Ferenc Pálmai. During an alcohol-fueled evening with friends, Pálmai confessed that he despised his ordinary life so much that he had invented an extravagant fictional biography for himself. The imaginary life was a wildly exaggerated adventure filled with incredible twists, immense wealth, mysterious illnesses, spectacular financial ruin, and shocking revelations. Among its many absurd episodes, Pálmai claimed that he had spent his youth traveling the world with an eccentric foster mother, returned from Japan suffering from an inexplicable disease, lost a vast fortune on the world's six largest stock exchanges in a single year, and ultimately discovered through a medical examination that the man everyone believed him to be

[878] Lipp Tamás: *Kánkánia*. Liget Műhely Alapítvány, Budapest, 1997., p. 135.; Krúdy Gyula: *A vörös postakocsi*. 1913.
[879] Az Ujság, 1910. március 27.

had actually been born a woman. The bizarre story culminates in one memorable line: "*The life I would have liked to live was a true Croesus-like life*".[880] We should mention another story that does not fit neatly into this genre; however, the credibility of such a story is probably very low. A Hungarian newspaper published a letter from a Hungarian man serving in the Japanese army during the Russo-Japanese War. The man, who worked in Esztergom as a chimney sweep's assistant, named Tamás Russ, wrote that there were several Hungarians serving in the Japanese army with him. According to the story, this adventurous man suddenly disappeared from Esztergom, only to reappear after a long time, informing his fellow countrymen that he was fighting alongside several compatriots against the Russians in the Japanese army:

> "*Dated January 31, 1905, from Camp Saho. I have been serving with the Japanese for a year now as a volunteer private under General Oku. I know they'll be wondering in Esztergom where I've ended up. It's very cold here right now, and we're mostly quartered in huts: we've shoveled snow onto the roofs and up the sides. In a place like this, you don't feel the cold, and it's warm enough even without heating. There hasn't been a battle in two months. Our division, which includes many Hungarians and Poles, hasn't seen combat yet; except that they have us stringing barbed wire through the forests, which we tie to trees and stretch in a circle a few inches above the ground. Then we also dig two-elbow-deep pits, into which we drive sharp stakes, so that if a Russian Cossack falls in, he can't get out because the stakes pierce him. We're given rice porridge, salted fish, and cvibak to eat, and we always drink tea, but they also give us other meats and pasta. Once, General Oku came over to us and, through an interpreter, asked if it was true that we were Hungarians; he said we were valiant people – he'd heard about us. We were then served a good lunch. There are many Russians here whom we've captured; they're kept separate and are treated well. We've heard that a major battle is coming soon and that the Russians will be completely driven out. By summer, not a single Russian will be left here. Sincerely, Tamás Russ.*"[881]

[880] Az Ujság, 1912-09-26
[881] Magyar Földmivelő, 1905. Translated by the Author.

Japonism(e) had a significant impact on the notion of '***Japan as keepsake***'. Woodblock prints were gradually replaced by collectibles and memorabilia – such as photographs, postcards[882], albums, and even tattoos – marking the beginning of the era of *souvenirization* and *postcardization* of Japan. Japan introduced official government postal cards in December 1873, soon after establishing its modern postal service. These early cards were government-issued and typically did not feature pictures. Private illustrated postcards (絵葉書) were not allowed until October 1, 1900, when new regulations permitted their production and mailing. After that change, picture postcards rapidly became popular across Japan. In Europe, postcards served many purposes, generating strong demand and encouraging publishers to produce an ever-changing variety of designs. Souvenir photographs mainly depicted landscapes, everyday life, and Japan's modernization. Landscape images featured famous landmarks, castles, temples, and other notable locations, often serving as a record of places visitors had seen or wished to visit. Photographs of everyday life showed Japanese people of all ages engaged in activities such as eating, working, and performing. In addition, many albums included images of Japan's modernization, highlighting developments in transportation, engineering, and infrastructure. (Although these modern scenes were less common than landscapes and daily-life images, they demonstrated that souvenir photographs portrayed Japan as both traditional and modern.)[883] To maintain public interest, photographers broadened the range of motifs, frequently drawing on "exotic" locations. As a result, Japanese-inspired imagery gained significant popularity and was featured on postcards for numerous occasions. Postcards depicting Japanese themes

[882] Postcards have generally been undervalued in academic circles because they are mass-produced consumer goods. Libraries and museums rarely collected them, and their historical significance has often been overlooked. Most publications about postcards are non-academic and tend to take a nostalgic approach. The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston is a notable exception, with a substantial collection and related exhibitions and catalogues. Otherwise, most nineteenth- and twentieth-century postcards remain in private collections. An online postcard exhibition, "Japan in Miniature" (an exhibition of historic Japanese postcards from 1900 to 1940 from the Sepp Linhart Collection), is available here: https://japanologie.univie.ac.at/japanimkleinformat/ (accessed: 2026 Jan.). Another notable collection of Japanese picture postcards from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy period survives in Slovenia. These postcards date from the 1890s, when members of the Austro-Hungarian Navy traveled to Japan on duty. Collected and used by Slovenians, they are now preserved in the National and University Library in Ljubljana and the Maritime Museum "Sergej Mašera" in Piran. See: Chikako Shigemori Bučar: *Picture Postcards Sent from Japan by Austro-Hungarian Navy Members*. In: Tabula: časopis Filozofskog fakulteta, Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, No. 16, 2019., pp. 1-22.

[883] Naoko Adachi: *Exotic and Modern: Representing Meiji Japan in Photography*. In: The Newsletter 91 Spring 2022.

were widely distributed, with images of Japanese women appearing most frequently, followed by children. Natural motifs, such as chrysanthemums, cherry blossoms, and other flowers, were also used, primarily to convey a constructed image of a “traditional” Japan, catering to consumers who preferred nostalgic, pastoral scenes over the reality of a modernizing nation. These scenes created an idealized, paradisal vision of Japan. These recurring motifs presented Japan through stereotypical lenses – emphasizing femininity, innocence, and charm – with countless variations on similar scenes. Designers showed little interest in realism, prioritizing imaginative and idealized portrayals instead. Such imagery was used for a wide range of purposes, including seasonal greetings, and achieved considerable popularity, being produced and sold in large numbers. Because Japanese men were seldom depicted on these postcards, those who did appear were typically shown alongside wives or girlfriends and characterized as gentle and domesticated. An important exception was the image of the Japanese soldier, which became more prevalent after Japan’s victories in the Sino-Japanese, Boxer, and Russo-Japanese Wars. Postcards also included portraits of military commanders and notable statesmen. Postcards showing military battles were influential in shaping public views of Japan and East Asia. Released just days after news reports, they provided timely visual updates at a time when newspapers could not print photographs and illustrated journals were not in color.

By combining images with text, postcards both informed the public and allowed senders to demonstrate their knowledge of current political events. At the same time, Japan’s emergence as a major power and its technological progress were viewed as unsettling, and postcards reinforced an idealized, old-fashioned vision of the country.[884] In relation to souvenir photography in Japan, one name stands out: Charles Wirgman, an English painter, who arrived in Yokohama in 1861 as a correspondent and illustrator for *The Illustrated London News*. He taught Western painting and drawing to Japanese artists and published the monthly magazine *Japan Punch* (1862–1887). Wirgman collaborated with Italian photographer Felice Beato in the Beato & Wirgman Artists & Photographers company, producing illustrations from photographs and vice versa. By

[884] Peter Pantzer: *Japan in Early Twentieth-century European Picture Postcards*. In: Mutual Perceptions and Images in Japanese-German Relations, 1860–2010. Brill, 2017. pp. 194-195.; 196-199.

1876, over 130 professional photographers and more than twenty equipment dealers were recognized in Tokyo, while commercial studios and shops selling celebrity cartes-de-visite flourished. (The carte-de-visite or meishiban-shashin 名刺判写真 in Japanese, a small 9×6 cm photograph mounted on card, was a popular nineteenth-century format used mainly as a collectible rather than a visiting card, helping to circulate images of celebrities.) Popular districts like Asakusa had dozens of studios by the 1880s, and new studios opened across major cities, reflecting the rapid growth of commercial photography in Japan.[885] Tourist demand in the 1880s caused photography studios in Yokohama to grow as well, rising from ten in 1891 to fifteen by 1902. Felice Beato, active in the 1860s and early 1870s, was a pioneering Western souvenir photographer in Yokohama who set the standard for pictorial motifs in Japanese photography. He organized his work into “complete albums” of 100 prints or “half-albums” of 50. Later photographers like Stillfried, Farsari, and Kimbei Kusakabe inherited some of his negatives and continued to print and sell his images for decades. Kusakabe, a highly successful photographer in Yokohama and Tokyo, is credited with possibly being the first to introduce lacquered albums, which became a key feature of Yokohama souvenir photography in the early 1880s. Souvenir photography albums in Yokohama were often custom-made, and tourists frequently visited studios immediately upon arrival to select images of places they hadn’t yet seen. Ordering an album early ensured it would be ready by the end of their trip, a practice even recommended in travel guides. Kusakabe was even more creative in the souvenirization of his photographs, going beyond lacquered photo albums. After 1900, he expanded his products to include silk photo fans and a range of photographic jewelry, such as gold photo buttons, scarf pins, cuff buttons, lockets, and charms. By the mid-1900s, he had also begun producing metal fittings and accessories for cameras, strategically adapting to shifts in the market.[886] At its outset, Japanese souvenir photography was practiced mainly by Western photographers for foreign buyers and remained distinct from Japan's own photographic traditions. Over time, Japanese studios took over and the market

[885] Mio Wakita: *In the Guise of Elusive Veracity: Souvenir Photographs of Meiji Femininity in the Age of Visual Modernity*. PhD manuscript, Heidelberg University, 2010. p. 338.
[886] Mio Wakita: *Sites of “Disconnectedness”: The Port City of Yokohama, Souvenir Photography, and its Audience*. In: Transcultural Studies 2013/2., pp. 102.; 117.; 119.

changed as tourism expanded. Increased competition, especially from cheap postcards, eventually caused the industry to decline.[887] Throughout its history, souvenir photography was shaped by shifting foreign expectations and was never a neutral or fully authentic view of Japan, but a commercial product designed to fit what customers wanted to see.[888]

Countryside Japanese teahouse owners gave foreign visitors photographs of their establishments as souvenirs and as a form of promotion, and souvenir photograph albums were sold at Yokohama's Grand Hotel, highlighting the close connection between the city's photographic industry and its tourist economy. Photography became a thriving industry with thousands of practitioners. European photographers competed with skilled Japanese photographers, especially in cosmopolitan treaty ports like Yokohama, where ideas, techniques, and commercial practices circulated. Yokohama's souvenir photography was diverse and international, both reinforcing and challenging Japanese cultural stereotypes.[889] From the mid-1880s, Yokohama souvenir photographs began to be sold via overseas mail orders, and exports steadily grew after 1886, peaking around 1897. In 1896 alone, the export value of souvenir photographs reached 24,923 yen – 24,077 from Yokohama, 693 from Kobe, and 114 from Nagasaki – equivalent to about 63,730 colored prints (29 cents each) or 87,650 un-tinted prints (15 cents each). Yokohama accounted for roughly 96% of total exports. That same year, the Tamamura studio in Yokohama received an order from Boston's J.B. Millet Company for *one million* albumen prints for a multi-volume publication (1897–1898), largely reproducing studio images for foreign armchair travelers. This large-scale, government-supported venture effectively marketed Japan abroad, prioritizing the imagined vision of the country over direct, lived experience.[890]

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[887] Mio Wakita notes that the introduction of the Kodak #1 in 1888 made photography easier and more accessible, leading many tourists in Yokohama to become amateur photographers – by 1889, roughly half of visitors were estimated to be taking their own photos. This shift forced local souvenir studios to adapt, with one leading studio in 1898 paying 80% of its taxes on the sale of photographic supplies. See: Mio Wakita: *Sites of "Disconnectedness": The Port City of Yokohama, Souvenir Photography, and its Audience*. In: Transcultural Studies 2013/2., pp. 118-119.
[888] Mio Wakita: *Sites of "Disconnectedness": The Port City of Yokohama, Souvenir Photography, and its Audience*. In: Transcultural Studies 2013/2., pp. 78.; 84-86.
[889] Luke Gartlan: *Bronzed and muscular bodies: Jinrikishas, Tattooed Bodies and Yokohama Tourist Photography*. In: Transculturation in British Art, 1770-1930. Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2012. pp. 102-106.
[890] Mio Wakita: *Sites of "Disconnectedness": The Port City of Yokohama, Souvenir Photography, and its Audience*. In: Transcultural Studies 2013/2., pp. 120-121.

In the category of souvenir photographs, one genre stands out: staged rickshaw scenes were a popular form of souvenir photography for Western globetrotters in nineteenth-century Yokohama. Visitors often posed in studio setups that simulated rickshaw rides, creating images that were later collected in albums around the world. Staged rickshaw photographs can be viewed through the so-called “salvage paradigm”, the idea that cultures outside the West were assumed to be disappearing under the pressure of modernization and therefore had to be urgently documented before they vanished. In nineteenth-century photography, this meant preserving images of people, customs, and social types understood as “traditional” and endangered. Luke Gartlan notes that this framework works for some Yokohama studio images, such as figures dressed as samurai, since the Meiji government was dismantling the old class system, but it does not fully explain the popularity of rickshaw photographs. The rickshaw was a modern invention of the treaty-port era, not a remnant of the past. Yet it quickly became a standard studio prop and came to appear “traditionally Japanese” in tourist imagery, showing that souvenir photography did not just record a fading past but actively transformed new, modern elements into signs of timeless Japan.[891] It is known that British tourists often remarked on the elaborate tattoos of rickshaw pullers, admiring the designs and sometimes even getting tattoos themselves as permanent souvenirs of their visits to Japan.[892] Another characteristic of souvenir photography was the frequent appearance of women in the images, often representing an idealized “national” femininity and serving as a symbolic marker of Japan itself. Mio Wakita highlights that around 1893, Kimbei Kusakabe’s photo studio held over 400 “costume” photographs, with more than half featuring women and only about seventy focusing on men. He

[891] Luke Gartlan: *Bronzed and muscular bodies: Jinrikishas, Tattooed Bodies and Yokohama Tourist Photography*. In: Transculturation in British Art, 1770-1930. Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2012. p. 94. The rickshaw emerged in the late 1860s alongside the rise of international tourism in Japan and quickly became a common feature of urban life. Its invention was disputed, with Western sources crediting an American missionary and Japanese sources pointing to figures such as the photographer Renjō Shimooka. Rather than having a single inventor, the rickshaw developed through shared experimentation within the treaty-port environment, and later debates over its origins reflected competing Western and Japanese claims about innovation and modernity. Soon after its invention, the rickshaw became a standard subject in Yokohama studio photography, presented as a natural part of Japanese street life. Photographers such as Baron Raimund von Stillfried-Ratenicz helped popularize the theme for Western globetrotters. These images typically showed passengers, pullers, and attendants together, visually placing the rickshaw within Japan’s social and economic order and using the figures’ poses and gazes to suggest movement and an implied destination beyond the frame.

[892] Luke Gartlan: *Bronzed and muscular bodies: Jinrikishas, Tattooed Bodies and Yokohama Tourist Photography*. In: Transculturation in British Art, 1770-1930. Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2012. p. 97.

employed over forty female models for genre scenes, including some top-ranked geisha from prestigious entertainment districts. In early Japanese photography, pioneers like Hikoma Ueno (上野彦馬) and Renjō Shimooka (下岡蓮杖) often had their wives or daughters pose, but they also hired women from courtesan, geisha, or rashamen (prostitutes serving foreigners) ranks as models for souvenir photographs. In the Meiji period, geisha were celebrated for their skill in displaying their bodies aesthetically, unlike ordinary women, and were thus chosen as the first fashion models for kimono catalogues and department store posters. Photography helped establish geisha as an ideal of modern beauty, shaping ideals of femininity around photogenic appeal. By posing for the camera, geisha actively shaped their public image, presenting themselves as role models and elevating their social status. Their increasing praise in the mid-1890s as embodiments of style and taste reflected this self-display, which enhanced their prestige, benefited their managers, and allowed them to fulfill the moral and social expectations of Meiji-era geisha.[893] Westerners posing for the camera in Japanese "costumes" – something that today might be seen as cross-dressing or 'ethnomasquerade' – was likewise fashionable at the time, as evidenced by numerous photographs. (Commercial studios catered to foreigners' fascination with cultural cross-dressing by offering a range of Japanese "costumes" for portrait photography.) Alongside these examples, a less-studied genre should also be noted, depicting cruelty and Japanese punishments, such as public executions or studio-staged mock harakiri scenes. Since these types of photographs receive little attention in the literature, there is not much to say, but their significance warrants mention.

The souvenirization of Japan is also evident in the Western practice of creating Japanese gardens. As a result, Japanese gardens became popular "travel souvenirs", and increased Western exposure led to greater imports of Japanese garden objects and the construction of many private gardens in the West.[894]

[893] Mio Wakita: *In the Guise of Elusive Veracity: Souvenir Photographs of Meiji Femininity in the Age of Visual Modernity*. PhD manuscript, Heidelberg University, 2010. pp. 333-337., 345.
[894] Jessica Boentges: *Representations of Japanese gardens in the West at the turn of the 20th Century: The case studies of Clingendael and Schönbrunn*. Leiden University, Master Thesis, 2022. p. 7.

Japan on Display in the Kingdom of Hungary

Although the Vienna World's Fair included a section for amateur collectors – in which a Hungarian collector exhibited Asian objects – the Hungarian public was more likely to encounter Japanese items for the first time at contemporary permanent and temporary exhibitions[895] held in Hungary. The first exhibition of Asian objects opened on September 1, **1880**, at the *Ferenciek Bazaar* in Budapest, presenting 138 Japanese pieces.[896] In Miskolc, in **1887**, the traveler Imre Reichel presented collections brought back from his world trip, including objects from China, Japan, India, Africa, and Australia. Among the exhibits was an unusual Japanese "sea maiden", featuring a human-shaped head.[897] In **1896**, Antal Ribényi, the parish priest of Kispest, organized an exhibition at the National Museum featuring objects brought back from various missions around the world. Ribényi hoped to build a new church for his congregation in time for the 1896 Millennium celebrations, but support from both church and state proved insufficient. In 1895, he therefore appealed to fellow Christian missionary priests, asking them to send photographs and objects for an exhibition whose proceeds would fund the church's construction. This collection, titled the *Néprajzi Missió (Ethnographic Mission)*, was later transferred to the *Néprajzi Tár (Ethnographic Exhibition)* in 1898 and included 200 objects from Japan, such as ceramics, weapons, household utensils, pots, and models of larger tools.[898] At the beginning of the 1900s, Japanese art appeared in several small and large exhibitions in Budapest, and other towns. In **1899**, the *Iparművészeti Múzeum (Museum of Applied Arts)* expanded its permanent displays after receiving increased government funding, enabling it to exhibit 20 cases of previously unseen objects. The new displays included Gothic art, Delft faience, German stoneware, contemporary Hungarian and international decorative arts, Chinese and Japanese enamels, Zsolnay ceramics, Sèvres porcelain, goldsmiths' work,

[895] In 1871, János Xántus' collection was exhibited at the National Museum; in 1885, the first permanent exhibition of the Museum of Applied Arts opened, which included several items from the collection of Asian objects assembled by János Xántus.
[896] Dénes Mirjam: *A japonizmus árnyalatai – Japán kulturális és művészeti recepciója Magyarországon* In: Japonizmus a magyar művészetben. 2017., p. 129.
[897] Borsod-Miskolci Értesítő, 1887-10-06.
[898] Wilhelm Gábor: *A Néprajzi Múzeum japán gyűjteménye*. In: Határtalan Régészet - Archeológiai magazin, pp. 46-49.

and textiles. A first-floor exhibition featured Japanese leatherwork and Chinese and Japanese enamel pieces, including cloisonné and painted enamel. A donated eight-piece set demonstrated the full process of modern Japanese cloisonné. (It was gifted by Aladár Flesch, a Hungarian consul in Yokohama.)[899] In **1904**, a major exhibition of Asian collections was held at the *Nemzeti Múzeum (Hungarian National Museum)*,[900] featuring Japanese-related objects from several collectors, including Ferenc Hopp, Róbert K. Kertész, Benedek Balogh Barátosi, Emil Delmár, Ernő Kilián, Szigfrid Komor, and Artúr Kuhn. Kuhn displayed a bronze incense burner, Japanese furniture including a writing desk, bronze objects, silk-embroidered screens, and tea trays. Komor exhibited a complete set of Japanese dining-room furnishings, furniture including a distinctive piece with ivory inlays and gold lacquer, screens, Japanese metalwork, silk fabrics, and bronze objects. Delmár showed Japanese red-lacquered vessels, a Satsuma vessel, a carved wooden bookcase, three large Satsuma vases, and Buddha statues. Hopp exhibited Japanese bronze objects. Kilián displayed a small Japanese household shrine, a ladies' dressing table, and a tea table. Baráthosi assembled an ethnographic collection of small miscellaneous Japanese objects, figurines, and toys. Kertész exhibited paintings from the Tokyo Academy of Fine Arts, reproductions of works by Hokusai, arts-and-crafts objects, and Kyoto silk fabrics.[901] The exhibition remained open for a month and attracted 8,200 visitors. Jenő Cholnoky (Hungarian geographer and travel writer) criticized the exhibition for lacking authenticity and depth in its representation of East Asian applied arts. While it may have impressed first-time viewers with its visual appeal and craftsmanship, it was seen as disappointing for more knowledgeable observers, who regarded most objects as only a superficial reflection of "genuine East Asian artistic traditions". From an applied arts perspective, the collection was judged as not being of particularly high quality or significance, even if still visually interesting. From an ethnographic standpoint, its value was considered even lower by Cholnoky, since he believed it failed to provide meaningful insight into East Asian cultures and instead largely consisted of decorative objects produced for the European market, including modern Japanese embroideries, inlaid reliefs, watercolors, and silver

[899] Magyar Iparművészet, 2. évf. 5. sz., 1899., p. 226.
[900] Tolnai Világlapja, 1904-10-23.
[901] Magyarország, 1904-10-09.

items that prioritized aesthetic appeal.[902] In **1907**, an exhibition of amateur collections was organized at the *Iparművészeti Múzeum (Museum of Applied Arts)*, displaying Japanese objects from the collections of Emil Delmár, József Keszler, Marcella Lindh (Rosalind Jacobson), Ödön Faragó, and Kálmán Griegl. Emil Delmár exhibited antique Japanese Satsuma porcelain and inro. Ferenc Hopp contributed an extensive collection of Chinese and Japanese works, including bronze and porcelain pieces, lacquer boxes with gold and mother-of-pearl inlay, sword guards, and personal items such as Japanese hairpins and toiletry sets. József Keszler and his wife displayed Japanese sword guards (tsuba) and a "Jesuit" porcelain bowl. Marcella Lindh (Rosalind Jacobson) showed old Japanese and other East Asian stringed instruments, while Ödön Faragó contributed Japanese and Chinese vases and bowls. Kálmán Giergl presented a near-museum-scale collection of Japanese and Chinese ceramics, especially pottery masterpieces. Péter Vay's Japanese art collection was exhibited twice at the *Szépművészeti Múzeum (Museum of Fine Arts)*, in **1908** and **1910**. In **1909**, the *Műcsarnok (Kunsthalle)* hosted an international graphic art exhibition. One of its rooms was devoted entirely to Japanese woodcuts, including works by Hokusai and Hiroshige. A contemporary reviewer wrote: "*How easily we now understand this world that was once foreign to our eyes – the floridity of decorative surfaces, the rhyming of softly swaying lines. These sheets are so delicate, so light, so pleasing to the eye weary from European graphic art.*"[903] An exhibition of Oriental art was held in Kaposvár in August **1910**, organized by architect and designer Lajos Kozma after his return from Paris. It featured artworks from Japan, China, Persia, India, Egypt, Byzantium, and the Congo and was hosted in the auditorium of a state elementary school.[904] Among the many exhibitions held in these years, the *Japán Iparművészeti Kiállítás (Japanese Applied Arts Exhibition)*, presented at the *Iparművészeti Palota (Palace of Industrial Art)* in Budapest in January–February **1911**, received perhaps the greatest attention. The material had already been shown by the Japanese at the Japan–British Exhibition in London, and only part of it was brought to Hungary. Even so, a large-scale exhibition arrived: around nine hundred items packed in about one hundred crates, including

[902] Földrajzi közlemények 1904. IV.
[903] *A grafikai művek nemzetközi kiállításának tanulságai*, Művészet, 1909. 8. évf. 2. sz. pp. 73-90.
[904] Somogyvármegye, 1910-07-31.

Japanese ceramics, applied arts objects made of ivory and clay, lacquerware, bronze pieces, wood carvings, painted and embroidered pictures, bamboo baskets, Japanese toys, and dolls.[905] A short interview was conducted with painter Keiichirō Kume, the curator of the exhibition, in which he said the following about Hungarian art and Hungary:

> "*We have been familiar with Hungarian art since the World's Fairs, especially since the Paris World's Fair. I only learned that Hungary is a separate state since I have been in contact with it. I thought it was a province of Austria, just like Bavaria is a province of Germany. However, I knew about its art, and Munkácsy was the first to catch my attention.*"[906]

The Japanese really went all out for the exhibition: they decorated the grand hall of the *Museum of Applied Arts* magnificently. Green stands were placed under the arcades and decorated with cherry blossoms and lilacs. Japanese copper lanterns and lanterns with floral motifs were hung under the arches of the arcades. The Japanese flag was displayed, with the Hungarian flag opposite it. The exhibition featured some 900 objects by 128 artists, representing the most renowned Japanese workshops and masters from Kyoto, Osaka, Nagasaki, Kobe, Kanagawa, Satsuma, Shiga, and Toyama.[907] Part of the exhibition was donated to the *Museum of Applied Arts*, and some valuable items were purchased by Count Miklós Bánffy, Mrs. Hugó Payr, and Ödön Palotay of Várpalota, honorary consul of the Japanese Imperial Consulate in Budapest. Also in **1911**, between April and May, the *Művészház's Keleti Kiállítás (Eastern Exhibition of the Artists' House)* was held, where Japanese woodcuts owned by Miklós Vitéz, József Rippl-Rónai, Lajos Kozma, and József Brummer were displayed. It can be said that the period from the Millennium to World War I was a special era for Japanese art exhibitions in Hungary, with seventeen Japanese-related exhibitions held during this time.[908] Until the turn of the century, exhibitions focused mainly on 19th-century applied arts or industrial art, but the emphasis during this period shifted to Japanese fine arts

[905] Özv. Báthory Nándorné: *A japán művészetről*. Művészet. 1911. 10. évf. 1. szám., pp. 38-48.; *A japán kiállítás*. Budapesti Napló, 1911. január 6. p. 12.
[906] *A japán kiállítás*. Budapesti Napló, 1911. január 6. p. 12. Translated by the author.
[907] *A japán kiállítás – megnyitás előtt*. Budapesti Napló, 1911. január 14. p. 10.
[908] Dénes Mirjam: *A japonizmus árnyalatai – Japán kulturális és művészeti recepciója Magyarországon* In: Japonizmus a magyar művészetben. 2017., p. 205.

(woodcuts, paintings), and it was during the series of exhibitions held in Hungary between 1900 and 1914 that Japanese objects gained their function as classic works of art (i.e., not curiosities or ethnographic objects, but artistic products).[909]

Silk embroidered pictures at the Japanese exhibition

Incidentally, the Japan–British Exhibition in London had some Hungarian connections. With an estimated 8 to 8.5 million visitors over six months, it ranked among the major blockbuster exhibitions of the early twentieth century in Europe – surpassed by only the largest world's fairs such as the Paris Exposition of 1900, but comparable to other highly successful British and European exhibitions of the period. After the exhibition closed, the displays were divided into three parts: the most important and valuable works were shipped back to Japan; some items were donated to British museum collections and to private individuals (including members of the royal family); and the rest were sent to three exhibitions opening in late 1910 and early 1911: the mining section to Turin, the natural sciences section to Dresden, and the art section to Budapest. The exhibition reached Budapest through the efforts of Jenő Radisics, then director of the *Museum of Applied Arts*. The *Museum of Fine Arts* sent Zoltán Takács Felvinczi to the Japanese exhibition in London, providing him with a letter of recommendation from Radisics. After viewing the exhibition, Felvinczi presented Radisics's letter and, in November 1910, requested permission from Seishin Hirayama, president of the association organizing the London exhibition, to display part of it in Budapest. The exhibition was subsequently approved by Ödön Palotay, the honorary

[909] Dénes Mirjam: *Az Osztrák-Magyar Monarchia és Japán kapcsolattörténetének témájában tervezett kiállítás művészettörténeti témájú termének terve* (manuscript) Lőrinci, 2012., p. 2.; Dénes Mirjam: *A japonizmus árnyalatai – Japán kulturális és művészeti recepciója Magyarországon* In: Japonizmus a magyar művészetben. 2017., p. 119.

consul of Japan in Budapest. Several influential Hungarians assisted in bringing the exhibition to Budapest. The Japan–British Exhibition in London had been organized by Imre Királyfy (Imre Kiralfi, 1845–1919), a Hungarian émigré, millionaire producer, and exhibition organizer. Királyfy, who had Hungarian roots, fully supported Radisics's initiative. Another figure who most likely backed the Hungarian request was Arthur Diosy (1856–1923), the founding president of the Japan Society in England. Diosy also had Hungarian ancestry, although he was born in England: his father, Márton Diósy, had been the secretary of Lajos Kossuth during his exile. The Budapest exhibition (for which no catalogue was produced) featured more than 800 objects from 128 exhibitors. Ceramics made up the bulk of the display, followed by metal and lacquer objects, and there were also ivory works (with the exception of netsukes). Radisics himself described the works on show as "*rather cheap than beautiful*". Contemporary press coverage was similarly negative, due to the fact that the material sent to Budapest represented only the modern, contemporary art section of the London exhibition, whereas the press had expected the entire London collection to be shown. Criticism of a different nature came from Budapest's craftsman community, which argued that it was merely a private enterprise whose sole purpose was to foist foreign manufactured goods on the people of Budapest at exorbitant prices.[910]

On the occasion of the 1911 Japanese exhibition in Budapest, a Hungarian exhibition was organized in Japan, thanks to the initiative of a teacher, Mrs Dr Gusztáv Kurtz (née Etelka Zelles). Etelka met the Japanese organizers of the Budapest exhibition in 1911, among them Kanno Makoto (衷菅野), a teacher at the Tokyo Art Academy. They began corresponding, and in time she raised the idea of a Hungarian exhibition, which Makoto welcomed, indicating that he would be pleased to host such an event. After receiving his reply, Etelka did not hesitate: in December 1911 she immediately began collecting materials for the exhibition. Sparing no effort or expense, she gathered some 1,300 pieces of applied art and sent them to Makoto in Tokyo.[911] The Hungarian exhibition opened in Tokyo in October 1912 and remained on view until 1 April 1913. A contemporary article describes the exhibition as follows:

[910] Pesti Hírlap, 1911-01-24
[911] Vasárnapi Újság, *Magyar kiállítás Tokióban.* 1913. July. Source: Huszadik század internetes archívum, http://www.huszadikszazad.hu/

"*Japanese daily newspapers and magazines reported on the exhibition, which was of great interest to them and to masters of applied arts, with warm sympathy and great appreciation. Their illustrated magazines featured a portrait of the noble-minded lady, Mrs Dr. Kurtz, and a whole series of illustrations taken from the exhibition. In addition to the substantial articles, we see photographs of Hungarian handicrafts, embroidery, scarves, and ribbons. Among our painters, it seems that Árpád Feszty and Jenő Jendrássik were the most interesting to the Japanese (...).*"[912]

Japanese article about the Hungarian exhibition in Tokyo

Collecting Japan in Hungary

Among the many facets of Japan-fashion, the contemporary passion for collecting Japanese objects offers a revealing glimpse into the ways Japan was imagined and consumed abroad. Henry Yu observes that in America, collecting

[912] Vasárnapi Újság, *Magyar kiállítás Tokióban.* 1913. July. Source: Huszadik század internetes archívum, http://www.huszadikszazad.hu Translated by the author.

knowledge about Japan and the "Orient" turned "exotic" cultures into objects of fascination for elite whites, who used this knowledge to present themselves as adventurous, cultured, and cosmopolitan. Europeans engaged in similar practices, fetishizing the exotic to display taste, worldliness, and social distinction.[913] One of the first Hungarian 'curio hunters'[914] in Japan was traveler Géza Bernáth, who wrote the following about his experience in Yokohama in 1869:

> "*I spent most of my time in Yokohama shopping and visiting shops selling rare items. There are very beautiful items made of lacquer wood, such as cabinets, bowls, boxes, etc., as well as bronze vases and various artistic objects (...) for example, ivory carvings, fans, etc. Lacquer wood objects are unsurpassed in terms of taste and workmanship, as are ivory objects and bronze works, all of which are freehand creations and true examples of patience, skill, and taste. The nicer items can only be purchased at high prices, with beautiful bronze stands and gold-inlaid ivory boxes costing five hundred, a thousand, or even two thousand forints, but the prices are usually reduced by a quarter, though only in very exceptional cases.*"[915]

As collecting 'japanosities' became inseparable from the experience of Western 'world-tramplers' in Japan, a transnational market emerged to meet the growing demand of collectors abroad. This surge in collecting generated lively debates about Japanese art and aesthetics, producing immediate aesthetic and ideological conflicts around the objects themselves. Basil Hall Chamberlain recounts these faintly absurd contemporary disputes with characteristic wit:

> "*Few things have excited more interest among collectors of Japanese curios than the cha-no-yu, or tea ceremonies, of which so many of the highly prized little*

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[913] Henry Yu: *Thinking Oriental*. Oxford University Press, 2001. pp. 85-86.

[914] A curio is an object that is unusual, rare, or interesting, often collected for its novelty, beauty, or historical and cultural value. The term originates from the Latin word *curiosus*, meaning careful, inquisitive, or curious, and entered English in the 17th century to describe objects that aroused curiosity or attention. During the 17th and 18th centuries, European collectors assembled "*cabinets of curiosities*" (or *Wunderkammern*), which contained small natural, artistic, and ethnographic items, all considered worthy of study or display. By the 19th century, with increased global trade and imperial expansion, the term came to be associated with ethnographic or exotic objects imported from Asia, Africa, and the Americas, often sold in specialty shops and collected for decorative purposes. Throughout its development, a curio has been understood as a small, collectible item that sparks curiosity and reflects both aesthetic interest and cultural or scientific fascination.

[915] Bernáth Géza: *Keletázsiai utazás*. 1873. p. 198. Translated by the author

'japanosities' in their collections are in one way or another the implements. And as quarrelling with other collectors is part of every true collector's nature, so also has the battle raged round the Japanese tea-table, a veritable and literal storm in a tea-cup. One set disparages the tea ceremonies as essentially paltry and effeminate, and asserts that their influence has cramped the genius of Japanese art, by confusing beauty with archaism and making goals of characteristics worthy only to be starting-points. The opposite school sees in these same ceremonies a profoundly beneficial influence – an influence which has kept Japanese art from leaving the narrow path of purity and simplicity for the broad road of a meretricious gaudiness."[916]

Numerous Hungarian traveler-collectors journeyed to Japan and amassed Japanese objects; the best known among them are János Xántus, Ferenc Hopp, Benedek Balogh Barátosi, and Péter Vay. The items collected by János Xántus in Japan cannot truly be classified as classic art collecting: the Japanese objects he acquired during the 1869 East Asian expedition – later housed in the *Néprajzi Múzeum (Museum of Ethnography)* – differ somewhat from other collections, as they consist mainly of everyday modern objects, applied art products, ceramics, and Japanese paper.[917] The current Japanese collection of the *Néprajzi Múzeum (Museum of Ethnography)* is based on the material gathered during Xántus's 1869 journey (663 items), which included photographs.[918] Based on my calculations, after examining the Japanese collection of the Natural History Museum – which holds the other part of the Xántus collection – I also estimate that there were originally around seven hundred items related to Japan, including a large number of snails, shells, and insects. Browsing through Xántus's collection list reveals traces of his wide-ranging interests. The concept behind the collection is similar to that of the Dutch Siebold Collection in that the Japanese objects are primarily

[916] Basil Hall Chamberlain: *Japanese Things - Being Notes on Various Subjects Connected with Japan*. Charles E. Tuttle Co., Rutland, Vermont & Tokyo, Japan. 1971. pp. 455-456.
[917] Gábor Wilhelm: *The Japanese Collection of the Museum of Ethnography of Budapest.* Presentation at *Non-European ethnographical collections in Central and Eastern Europe ECHO Workshop*, Budapest, 2004. March 26-27.
[918] Gábor Wilhelm: *The Asia and Indonesia Collections*. In.: János Gyarmati: *Taking them back to my homeland... – Hungarian collectors – Non-European Collections of the Museum of Ethnography in a European Context*, Museum of Ethnography Budapest, 2008., p. 160.

connected to natural science studies, but they also serve as ethnological artifacts illustrating the lives and everyday routines of East Asian peoples.[919] The thematic processing of the natural science objects in the Xántus collection was carried out by three Hungarian scientists: the plants were examined by botanist Ágost Kanitz; the ichthyological (fish) material by ichthyologist Dr. János Károli; and the Japanese Hemiptera (true bugs) were systematized by entomologist Dr. Géza Horváth.[920] As a result, seven new fish species and four new insect species were discovered. It should be noted that only one quarter of the herbarium material collected in Japan came from Xántus himself, while three quarters were gathered by Dr. Emanuel Weiss, the Austrian ship's doctor of the corvette *Friedrich*. Weiss collected plants for his own interest during the 1869 Austro-Hungarian East Asian expedition, but committed suicide on board on May 20, 1870. Xántus purchased his collection after his death, and later generously sent duplicate specimens to museums in Vienna, Berlin, and Leiden.[921] Xántus's Japan-related collection mainly contained objects and specimens from Yokohama in 1869. (Due to the limited funds available and the difficulties of transportation, Xántus was only able to purchase small items.) Although the majority of the Xántus collection consisted of animal and plant specimens, he was also interested in industrial products and everyday objects, whether elaborate or simple in design. He sought to provide a comprehensive picture of the material world of everyday life rather than selecting pieces classified as classical art. He paid particular attention to local raw materials, especially bamboo, paper works, and products made from silk thread. Xántus aimed to build a comprehensive and affordable collection representing the full range of East Asian industry, prioritizing varied and representative examples over expensive showpieces, in order to inform viewers – especially Hungarian craftsmen – about the diversity and development of East Asian handicrafts. The two most prominent types of objects in Xántus's collection are undoubtedly wooden and bamboo vessels and paper samples. His collection features many objects, including paper samples, baskets, trays,

[919] Bincsik Mónika: *Japán műtárgyak gyűjtéstörténete Magyarországon a 19. század második felében – kitekintéssel a nemzetközi összefüggésekre*. Phd thesis, 2009., ELTE, p. 86.
[920] Természetrajzi Füzetek, 1877. Vol 1-3. pp. 179-180.; For more information on entomologist Dr. Géza Horváth's connections to Japan, see: Chapter Four.
[921] Dr. Szabó Péter: *Kutatás Xántus János herbáriumai után*, Spanyolnátha Művészeti Folyóirat online, www.spanyolnatha.hu/print.php?id=2289&menu=arhcivum (accessed: 2014 May, link no longer available)

lacquerware, porcelain, fans, lanterns, toiletries, brooms, woodworking tools, and more. Unique objects or sets of objects are rare (e.g., writing sets or umbrellas). In most cases, series were organized by raw material or manufacturing technique, forming separate series of lacquered and inlaid vessels, rice straw sandals, paper fans, paper lanterns, rattan and bamboo baskets, and bamboo wallets. Objects were much less frequently selected based on function. Exceptions include toiletries (combs, brushes, incense holders), musical instruments (bamboo flutes, stringed instruments, etc.), Buddhist statues, weapons, house and boat models, and household utensils. Even in these cases, Xántus's primary consideration was the raw material or technique; only later, retrospectively and occasionally, did he assemble different functional units from similar types of series. For example, brooms made of reeds, rushes, or sorghum were arranged in separate small series. The emphasis on material is further illustrated by the fact that the collection contains 120 paper samples, 108 of which belong to a single series.[922]

"*List of books, manuscripts, and other literary works acquired during the East Asian mission*"[923]

Item No.	Description
70.	Very interesting ink copies
72.	Japanese scenes of everyday life, printed on raw silk and hand-colored
74.	Japanese calendar for the year 1869
191.	Japanese folk life and occupations, with many colored woodcuts (all very old editions and highly sought-after Japanese works, the best Japan has to offer in this field)
197.	Very striking woodcuts depicting Japanese folk life (highly sought-after Japanese works, now very rare)

[922] Wilhelm Gábor: *Xántus János japán gyűjteménye a Néprajzi Múzeumban*. In: Határtalan régészet, 2022/2. pp 56-58.
[923] *Természettudományi Múzeum (Natural History Museum)*, János Xántus' collection documents, 1869-1873. (edited, selected excerpts, translated by the author)

List of naturalistic and folk art objects acquired during the East Asian expedition"[924]

Item No.	Description
1572.	Insects (Nagasaki, Japan, collected by myself)
1619.	Ordinary women's hat
1618.	Ordinary flashlight
1620.	Room broom
1753.	Japanese paper samples
1760.	3 nibu - gold coins, 3 ichibu - silver coins
1763.	A barrel of fish, crabs, snails, and snakes from the market
1862.	A very finely crafted cigar case made of bamboo (Kobe, Japan)
1869.	Strange box with drawers that can be pulled out from all 4 sides, made of colored wood
1879.	Jewelry box made of tick and nutmeg cubes
1895.	Clothes brush (Ooshima, Japan)
1905.	Grater
1919.	Military helmet worn by Yakunins, with shoulder pad (Yokohama, Japan)
1921.	The street dress of a noblewoman, made of silk embroidered with gold
1937.	Artistically carved figure made of ivory (very old)
1941.	Map of Yeddo
1943.	Bronze bell (struck from the outside with a wooden mallet)
1944.	Church bell with an exceptionally beautiful sound
1945.	High-ranking officer's hat in the entourage of the Mikado
1959.	Cheese, sugar cover against flies
1969.	The finest ladies' steel mirror, in the finest gold-plated case
1993.	Two commercial advertisements (Yokohama, Japan, gift)
2003.	Old cutlery holder made of the finest gold enamel (the most valuable piece of enamel in the entire collection, purchased at auction)
2053.	An inkstone that doubles as a desk inkwell, since they write with ink and brush
2064.	Stick that can be extended and used as a fishing rod (made of bamboo)
2071.	Chopsticks that are used instead of forks
2074.	Tea measure, as used in the market
2079.	Very nicely knitted broom
2107.	Washing brush made of palm fiber
2120.	Lip brush, made from a single piece of wood
2138.	Porcelain samples from the Kyoto factory
2217.	Finest yakunin-style large ceremonial sword (second-hand)
2218.	1 Koban, minted in 1301. The largest gold coin currently in circulation in Japan.
2219.	Old Japanese guitar, turtle shell, ebony and ivory carvings ... Daimio (prince) coat of arms (purchased from an art lover's collection)
2221.	Statue of God of Mercy on a pedestal. Sold by a Buddhist priest from a temple altar

[924] *Természettudományi Múzeum (Natural History Museum)*, János Xántus' collection documents, 1869-1873. (edited, selected excerpts, translated by the author)

2222.	Antique bronze vase. With the coat of arms, crest, and name of Satzuma Daimio (prince) (purchased at auction)
2223.	An old large bronze vase from the collection of the American envoy who returned home
2236.	Japanese footwear

Item 2221, "*Statue of the God of Mercy on a pedestal, sold by a Buddhist priest from a temple altar*" deserves special mention. The late 1860s and the early 1870s offered foreigners the opportunity to acquire fine Japanese art at low prices, which they often brought home and donated to national museums. Today, these collections form the core of Japanese art holdings in the West, including extremely rare items and works now considered National Treasures that could no longer be legally exported from Japan. Buying a Buddhist statue directly from an *altar* was hardly the most refined form of collecting – not only by modern ethical standards, but by those of the time as well. Yet, when the opportunity presented itself, such finer ethical considerations often seemed to disappear in the collector's eagerness to acquire. Most probably, Xántus himself was struck by the casual manner in which such a transaction was offered and concluded, yet he seems to have had no qualms about taking advantage of it. Looking beyond this particular transaction, a more complex historical story comes into view: the purchase itself was made possible by a fundamental shift in Japan's approach to Buddhism. Before the Meiji period, Buddhism was closely tied to the Tokugawa state, but maintaining around 100,000 temples was a heavy financial burden for the population. With the establishment of pro-imperial Shinto as the state religion, Buddhist temples were expropriated, lost their agricultural resources, and many religious objects, texts, and artworks were destroyed. Until 1873, Japan's art market had few buyers, and foreign residents acquired overlooked masterpieces, forming the basis of Japanese art collections abroad. This widespread destruction of religious images and temples fundamentally altered Japan's artistic landscape, and surviving Buddhist priests, struggling financially, often tried to sell remaining artifacts – sometimes illegally[925] –

[925] Large numbers of Japanese artworks left the country in the late nineteenth century because effective heritage protection was slow to develop. The government prioritized rapid Westernization and technological progress over cultural preservation, making artworks cheap and widely available. Although awareness existed, early measures like the 1871 Plan for the Preservation of Ancient Artifacts were ineffective. Later laws, including the Ancient Temples and Shrines Preservation Laws of 1897, protected only religious buildings and not privately owned art, so exports continued. By the end of the nineteenth century, attitudes began to change. See: Leszek Sosnowski: *Objects and ideas. Japan and Europe in the nineteenth century.* In: MASKA 4 (36), 2017. pp. 13-14.

which nonetheless appealed to Western tastes. Amid this upheaval, when many Buddhist temples and artworks were neglected during rapid modernization, Ernest Fenollosa, an American scholar, played a significant role in documenting and preserving Japanese art during the early Meiji period. He helped survey and catalogue temple treasures – most notably participating in the opening of the Hōryū-ji's secret Buddha in 1884 with government support – which contributed to early efforts to recognize important works as national cultural assets. If we go back to how Xántus thought about the purpose and practical utility of his own Japanese collection (apart from his obvious lack of self-reflection on his unethical collecting practices), we find the following:

> "*The Hungarian Industrial Museum, which is currently being established, already possesses such a collection of these famous Japanese industrial artifacts that few museums can compete with it. Partly from the Asian collection I have assembled, and partly from objects purchased in Vienna and acquired elsewhere, we will be able to open our Japanese section with a collection that, at least temporarily, will satisfy even the most demanding visitors. I cannot say that we can boast of particularly striking cabinet pieces, especially bronzes and porcelains. But we have a collection of all Japanese crafts that encompasses every Japanese era and presents us with a kind of serial history of every industry.*"[926]

During his travels, Ferenc Hopp collected souvenirs, ethnographic and applied art objects, although he was not an expert researcher of Japanese art, and his purchases were not characterized by systematic, definite artistic principles. Ferenc Hopp was primarily fascinated by applied art masterpieces that were intended for European tastes and were mainly exported during the Meiji period. His collection contains nearly 2,000 Japanese objects, including significant local souvenirs and everyday items, which means that, excluding the latter, we can speak of a collection of roughly 1,600 objects. These objects mainly date from the 18th and 19th centuries and are distributed as follows: there are 150 wooden objects, including wooden sculptures, animal figures, wooden boxes, belt-mounted tobacco boxes, a few lacquerware items,

[926] Vasárnapi Újság 1874 március 29., pp. 194-195. Translated by the author

Buddhist household altars, and a Japanese "zither" or koto. Hopp paid 1,800 krones for the most expensive wooden object, a gilded model of a temple. The rest of the collection consists of approximately 240 lacquerware items, including maki-e objects. Hopp was a keen collector of inrō[927] and netsuke,[928] with 125 of the former and nearly 300 of the latter in the collection. One of the most significant groups of objects consists of carvings made of ivory, specifically intended for export. More than 230 Japanese Satsuma ceramics and approximately 140 objects representing Japanese metalwork form further groups within the collection. Among the smaller groups of objects, the collection of 210 swords and guard plates (tsuba[929]) is particularly noteworthy. Selected pieces from the entire collection were exhibited in 1904 at the *Nemzeti Múzeum (National Museum)*, together with several other collectors.[930]

In Japan, Benedek Balogh Barátosi collected ethnographic material. Barátosi gained a dubious reputation in the scientific circles of Hungary at the time, which is often omitted in contemporary references to his persona or work. He was an assistant teacher in Budapest who came from the Székely Land (Transylvania) and who, one day, took it into his head to investigate the alleged Hungarian–Japanese connection or kinship. His trip to Japan was supported by Hungarian patrons, and he was even backed by a public fundraising campaign. Many people thought he was crazy for wanting to go to Japan with such an idea and so little money; there was a local saying about him: "*Barátosi isn't crazy, he's just a Szekler*". Many were surprised that, despite having little money, he eventually made it to Japan after all. He even received an editorial in the *Esti Újság*, which was, according to a contemporary opinion piece, "*roughly the highest honor one can receive in terms of popularity in Hungary*".[931] Barátosi was not taken seriously in some Hungarian academic circles, as is evident in an article and in one of the speeches during the Annual General Meeting of the Hungarian Ethnographic Society in 1904:

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[927] inrō (印籠) is a small, decorative case that was used to carry personal items such as medicine, seals, or small valuables

[928] netsuke (根付) is a small, carved toggle that was traditionally used as a functional and decorative accessory with a kimono

[929] tsuba (鍔) is the hand guard of a Japanese sword; it is an important component of the sword, serving both practical and artistic purposes

[930] Bincsik Mónika: *Japán műtárgyak gyűjtéstörténete Magyarországon a 19. század második felében – kitekintéssel a nemzetközi összefüggésekre*. Phd thesis, 2009., ELTE, pp. 116-121.; 124.

[931] Az Ujság, 1904-01-20.

"I think it is a naive but in every respect admirable undertaking on behalf of that enthusiastic teacher from the capital, who set out to explore the linguistic and ethnographic characteristics of related peoples in the East and did not stop until he reached Japan. (...) Unfortunately, several of the traveler's blank letters were later made public. From these, we learned that he intended to devote so little time to the study of the related peoples of the East that it would suffice only for someone who does not know what the task of a well-informed researcher is in the fields of linguistics and ethnography."[932]

Barátosi was most interested in the Ainu[933] people. His interest in the Ainu is in line with Western interest, which began in the second half of the nineteenth century, when many European and American explorers and scientists traveled to Hokkaido to study the Ainu, despite presenting the region as largely unexplored. To appeal to their readers, they often exaggerated the novelty of their discoveries, emphasized their scientific contributions, and used humor and exoticism in their travel accounts. At the same time, Japan's modernization and colonization of Hokkaido relied on Western advisors and aimed to develop the island economically while showcasing Japan's modernity. As Hokkaido attracted foreign visitors, the Ainu became a major focus of Western interest because of their distinct language, culture, and perceived racial differences from the Japanese, leading many Westerners to view them as key to understanding Japan's early history and population.[934] Baráthosi collected approximately 2,000 Ainu artifacts in Hokkaido and Sakhalin in 1914, despite a short collecting period curtailed by World War I. Part of the collection remained in Japan and Khabarovsk, but the objects eventually reached Europe in 1922 and were divided, with one-third entering the *Ethnographic Collection* of the *Hungarian National Museum*. In 1928, 324 Ainu objects were formally added to the Museum of Ethnography. The collection, assembled under tight time and financial constraints, included ritual objects as well as hunting and fishing implements.[935]

[932] *Ethnographia*, 15. évfolyam (1904) VIII. Társulati ügyek, A Magyar Néprajzi Társaság 1904. március 23-án tartott évi rendes közgyűlése

[933] The Ainu were once the indigenous people of Japan who lived a fishing and hunting lifestyle, but they were gradually pushed northward, mainly to Hokkaido.

[934] John L. Hennessey: *The recurring "discovery" of Hokkaido and the Ainu: three decades of nineteenth-century British travelogues*. In: Nineteenth-Century Context 2023. pp. 1-17. DOI: 10.1080/08905495.2023.2200129. pp. 1-2.

[935] Wilhelm Gábor: *A Néprajzi Múzeum japán gyűjteménye*. In: Határtalan Régészet - Archeológiai magazin, pp. 46-49.

His collecting activity was initially supported by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which provided him with a five-year research grant, but he also received financial assistance from the Hungarian Ministry of Education and Culture. His early collection of more than five hundred pieces was transferred to the *National Museum* in 1904 and 1905. In 1914, the museum acquired a third of Barátosi's Ainu collection. One third became Barátosi's property, while another third was distributed among various European museums. It is noteworthy that items from Barátosi's collection were still being discovered as late as 1990.[936] The collection reflected the "*traditions of Siebold's systematic ethnographic collections*" and "*preserved the last, assimilating, Japanizing phase of Ainu culture*".[937] Barátosi's collection was exhibited at the *Néprajzi Múzeum (Museum of Ethnography)* in 1996 with Japanese support.[938] He acquired slightly over 500 items in 1903–1904 for the *Néprajzi Tár (Ethnographic Exhibition)*, including lacquerware, household altars, utensils, and dolls.

[936] Wilhelm Gábor: *The Japanese Collection of the Museum of Ethnography of Budapest.* In 1996, when an exhibition of the Barátohosi collection was organized, it became clear that the material the Museum of Ethnography had purchased in 1904 and 1905 was incomplete. About 100 additional objects from the same period – mainly ceramics and ritual pieces – were still in the possession of the collector's descendants. These were eventually acquired by the Museum of Ethnography in the same year. János Gyarmati: *Taking them back to my homeland - Hungarian Collectors, Non-European Collections of the Museum of Ethnography in a European Context.* Néprajzi Múzeum, Budapest, 2008., p. 162.

[937] Bincsik Mónika: *Japán műtárgyak gyűjtéstörténete Magyarországon a 19. század második felében – kitekintéssel a nemzetközi összefüggésekre*. Phd thesis, 2009., ELTE, p. 131.

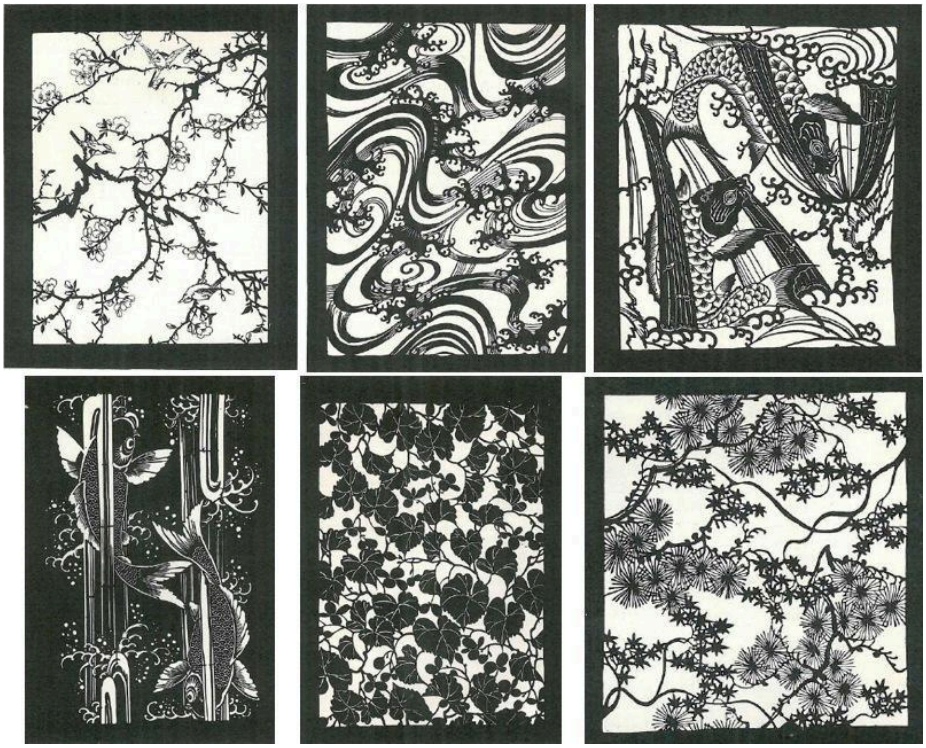
[938] *Baráthosi Balogh Collection Catalogue*. Museum of Ethnography, Hokkaido Ainu Culture Research Center, 1999. A virtual exhibition featuring a selection of Barátosi's collection is available at: https://www.neprajz.hu/bbb/default.htm (accessed: 2026 June)

A Japanese palanquin in good condition from one of Hungary's museums, which has never been displayed in an exhibition (courtesy of Gábor Zsigmond, Magyar Műszaki és Közlekedési Múzeum)

In 1907, Péter Vay collected[939] woodcuts and other objects in Japan for the *Szépművészeti Múzeum (Museum of Fine Arts)*. This cost 20,000 krones, which was covered by the state budget.[940] Vay sent home a total of 2,337 purchased items in three crates. According to an inventory from 1909, these included 1,093 woodcuts, 338 Buddhist scroll paintings and other paintings, 719 small sculptures, 176 woodcut books, and 11 wooden statues.[941] The collection focuses on fine art. The applied arts section includes metal tsuba, writing sets, netsuke, lacquerware, inrō, combs, and boxes. (His 1907 art purchases were made with the assistance of the Japanese director of the Nara Museum. Thanks to the director's help, the Buddhist sculptures became a particularly distinguished part of the Vay collection. Nevertheless, Vay's collecting ethics were just

[939] Vay had collected items before, but only for himself. Among his first acquisitions were Japanese lacquer boxes purchased in 1880. Szépművészeti Múzeum irattár, 1339/1907
[940] Szépművészeti Múzeum irattár, 851/1907
[941] Szépművészeti Múzeum irattár, 1365/1908

as questionable as Xántus's, as he stated that Buddhist monasteries were also "*worth visiting because each of them had many valuable paintings and works of art*".)[942] Exhibitions from Vay's collection were held at the *Museum of Fine Arts* from 1908 onwards. On the occasion of the 1908 exhibition, a contemporary article notes that the collection was commissioned by Count Albert Apponyi, Minister of Public Education. The exhibited portion of the collection included oil paintings, watercolors, woodblock prints, six sculptures, and a range of small decorative objects, such as knife sheaths, sword guards, inkwells, boxes, and earrings.[943] In 1910, the *Museum of Fine Arts* held another exhibition of engravings, supplemented by later purchases and donations, which attracted 26,000 visitors.[944] Vay's collection received mixed reviews in the Hungarian press.[945]



Japanese paper stencils[946] used for fabric dyeing from the Museum of Applied Arts

[942] Vay Péter: *A Keleti féltekén*. Franklin Társulat, 1918. p. 312.
[943] Budapesti Hírlap, 1908-12-20
[944] Felvinczi Takács Zoltán: *Japán művészeti kiállítás*. 1910 május, Magyar Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest
[945] Vasárnapi Újság 1910 július 24; Nyugat, 1910. 12. sz.; A Hét 1908 november 15.; Nyugat 1909 január 16.
[946] Paper stencils (katagami in Japanese), glued together from several layers and cut into patterns with a knife, were used for dyeing fabrics. The stencils were placed on the fabric, paint was applied to them, and the paint that passed through the cut-out parts traced the pattern of the stencil onto the fabric. Heinrich Siebold, interpreter and secretary of the Austrian-Hungarian embassy in Tokyo, also collected Japanese paper stencils. His enormous collection contains some 120,000 pieces, which are currently owned by the *Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst* in

In addition to the more famous collectors, other less well-known individuals also contributed to Hungarian collections with their art holdings. At the 1878 World's Fair in Paris, Edmund Zichy purchased Japanese artifacts for the *Iparművészeti Múzeum (Museum of Applied Arts)*, acquiring them partly from Japan's own exhibition and partly from the Société Japonaise in Paris. The objects Aladár Flesch collected in Japan are little known, even though they appeared in several exhibitions – for example, in 1899 at the *Museum of Applied Arts*:

> "*(...) in the right-hand room, we can see decorated Japanese leathers and Chinese and Japanese enamel works. The latter include both old and modern techniques, namely cloisonné, à jour enamel, filigree, and painted enamel, while the modern Japanese cloisonné technique is represented by a series of eight pieces, which allow the process to be studied from start to finish. This series was donated to the institute by Aladár Flesch, our compatriot consul in Yokohama*".[947]

Flesch assembled a collection of several thousand objects, combining both art and everyday utility items. He later divided and donated it to two institutions: part went to the *Department of Ethnography* and another part to the *Museum of Applied Arts*. The ethnographic portion donated to the *Department of Ethnography* consisted of exactly 518 pieces. This segment was transferred in three separate donations, occurring in 1897, 1900, and 1907. The collection mainly included ceramics and weapons, but also contained household tools, clothing items, and dolls. It was the result of many years of selective collecting and included several notably valuable pieces.[948] Attila Szemere likewise brought home a smaller collection from Japan – Japanese weapons, armor, a collection of lacquer combs and hairpins, and lacquer boxes – which was later purchased by the *Museum of Applied Arts* in 1884 for 7,000 krones. His collection of

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Austria. Katagami gained special attention in Central European collections. Though considered cheap, practical tools in Japan, their intricate designs and stylized patterns made them highly collectible in the West. By 1918, their numbers in Central Europe even surpassed ukiyo-e prints. Japanese artworks, especially stencils, were widely used in design schools like Vienna's Kunstgewerbeschule as inspiration and teaching aids. See: Mirjam Dénes, Györgyi Fajcsák, Piotr Spławski, Toshio Watanabe: *Japonisme in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy*. Museum of Fine Arts–Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, 2020. p. 105.

[947] Magyar Iparművészet, 2. évf., 5. szám, 1899. szept., p. 226. http://epa.oszk.hu/01000/01059/00013/pdf/1899_05_225-240.pdf (accessed: 2025 Nov.)

[948] János Gyarmati: *Taking them back to my homeland - Hungarian Collectors, Non-European Collections of the Museum of Ethnography in a European Context*. Néprajzi Múzeum, Budapest, 2008., pp. 161-162.

combs acquired in Japan is now held by the *Ferenc Hopp Museum of East Asiatic Art*. In addition, the Hungarian state purchased valuable works of art from Szemere in 1902 and 1904. The latter transaction is recorded in the minutes of a contemporary cabinet meeting:

> "*Attila Szemere offered two very valuable Japanese works of art, an enameled arc lamp and a wooden altar, to the Museum of Applied Arts for purchase at cost price for 10,400 krones. Considering the great artistic value of the objects, it is highly desirable that they be purchased to enrich the Japanese section of our Museum of Applied Arts. However, since the museum's modest budget of 10,000 krones cannot be earmarked solely for the purchase of these objects, the Minister of Religion and Public Education requests authorization to transfer the sum of 10,400 krones necessary for the purchase as an unbudgeted expenditure*".[949]

János Vadona's collection of Japanese artifacts (1891–92) is not widely known in Hungarian art history, but it deserves mention here. His collection primarily consisted of applied arts, of which approximately 60 Chinese and Japanese objects remain, although he originally collected around 1,000 Japanese items for the *Kolozsvári Iparmúzeum* (*Industrial Museum in Kolozsvár,* now Cluj-Napoca)[950] Little is known about János Vadona beyond his three-and-a-half-year journey around the world. A pharmacist by profession, he was an active supporter of cultural causes and a member of the Geographical Society, whose interests and experiences shaped his travels. His collection was donated to the Kolozsvári Iparmúzeum and will be discussed in detail later. Elek Zsoldos donated 48 valuable Japanese and Indian ethnographic objects and antiques, along with 259 photographs from his world trip, to the *Szentes Museum* in 1911. The items include Japanese handicrafts, clothing, household objects, Indian weapons, a 500-year-old Buddha statue, elephant bone tools, and jewelry, significantly

[949] MOL K 27, Minisztertanácsi Jegyzőkönyvek (1904. 03. 19.), 26 R/30. Translated by the author.
[950] Miklós Székely: *János Vadona's Collection of Japanese and Chinese Objects in the Museum of Industry in Kolozsvár* In.: Zsombor Jékely, Zsuzsa Margittai, Klára Szegzárdy-Csengery (eds.): *Ödön Lechner in Context - Studies of the international conference on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Ödön Lechner's death*. Museum of Applied Arts Budapest, 2015, p. 96.

enriching the museum's 'Oriental' collection.[951] Among individual collectors, one case stands out: a person who owned a Japanese object that appeared at auction in 1922. In 1905, Ignác Schwarz, a mining entrepreneur from Budapest, presented Field Marshal Iwao Ōyama, via the Japanese ambassador in Vienna, with a rifle that had allegedly belonged to Napoleon. In return, Ōyama sent a Japanese ceremonial sword that he had received from the Emperor of Japan. According to the 1922 auction catalogue, the sword was gilded and featured bronze fittings, gold lacquer decoration, an aventurine lacquer scabbard, a curved steel blade, a white snakeskin grip with gilded bronze fittings and engraved decoration, and a tsuba with four curved edges. The scabbard bore the coat of arms of the Japanese imperial family.[952] The *Hanságí Museum* in Mosonmagyaróvár holds some interesting and hitherto largely unknown material, thanks to a diplomat and traveler, Béla Rakovszky (1860-1916). Rakovszky arrived in Japan in 1901, and his handwritten diary contains several references to the purchase of works of art, as he was fond of visiting antique shops. At Kuhn&Co., he purchased, among other things, an old, approximately one-and-a-half-meter-tall, gilded Buddha, but he also bought three vases from a Japanese dealer, which had just returned to Japan from the World's Fair in Paris. Along with these vases, he bought a square, round carved table and several smaller and larger Japanese bronze pieces. In Tokyo, he bought "*very beautiful Satsuma pots from the dealer Yoko Kobayashi*", which "*are decorated with countless small windows depicting a procession or other ceremonial parade*".[953] From the largest dealer in Nikko (Otake), he bought a large tray "*made of fossil black wood*" for his mother, on which he also had Japanese text engraved.[954] Unfortunately, we do not yet know exactly what remains of this collection, as the part of the Rakovszky estate relating to Japan has not yet been identified. It is characteristic of the period under

[951] Szentesi Lap 1911. május 7. An inventory from 1986 lists the following items: a Japanese porcelain plate, a porcelain cup, an ink writing set with brush, a metal pipe with case, a leather wallet from Japan, an old Japanese picture book, an ivory paper knife, an enameled metal vase with dragon decoration, Japanese metal vases, a Buddha statue in a wooden box, a soroban (abacus), steel scissors, brooms, a kitchen knife, a parasol, an umbrella, and a men's clothing set consisting of a coat, trousers, vest, stockings, wooden shoes, and straw shoes. See: Rózsa Gábor: *Kivonat a Csongrádvármegyei Múzeum néprajzi gyűjteménye 1903-1944. növedéki leltárnaplójából*. 1986.01.12. Szentes.

[952] Debreceni Független Újság 1905.07.13; Ernst Múzeum aukciói 1922.

[953] Béla Rakovszky's handwritten, later typed diary from 1901, p. 107. ; Rakovszky-hagyaték, Történeti Dokumentációs Leltár (TDL), Hansági Múzeum. Translated by the author.

[954] Béla Rakovszky's handwritten, later typed diary from 1901, p. 107. ; Rakovszky-hagyaték, Történeti Dokumentációs Leltár (TDL), Hansági Múzeum

review that ordinary individuals, as well as local notables, were also swept up in the collecting frenzy. One such figure was Aurél Gaszner, who – like his contemporaries – collected paintings, woodcuts, and ceramics, some of which are still preserved today in the *Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts*. Another museum, the *Néprajzi Múzeum (Museum of Ethnography)* in Budapest still retains records of those who donated Japanese objects to the institution up until World War I; a summary table of these donors follows below:[955]

Emília Aebersold:	8 pieces in 1898
Benedek Balogh Barátosi:	Approx. 500 pieces (collection gathered between 1903 and 1904)
Lajos Bella:	1 piece in 1912
János Csippék:	1 piece in 1904
József Czapkay:	1 piece in 1874
Mrs Péter Fischer:	7 pieces in 1908, 1910, 1911
Aladár Flesch:	518 pieces (between 1897-1907, on three occasions)
Jenő Fülep:	1909-1912 (it is not known exactly how many Japanese)
Mrs Ödön Kapusi:	1 piece 1910
Árpád Karácson private collector:	60 pieces in 1903 (Japanese bow and equipment)
Mrs Ferenc Kossuth:	1914 (it is not known exactly how many Japanese)
Artur Kuhn:	6 pieces in 1904
Elemér Marcell:	1 piece in 1914
Alajos Páskuj:	1 piece in 1913
Ferenc Pázmán antique dealer:	63 pieces in 1914 (18 netsuke, ceramics, coins, and sculptures)
Samu Pserhofer:	1897 (it is not known exactly how many Japanese)
Antal Ribényi:	200 pieces in 1898
Nándor Schossberger:	5 pieces in 1904

Another significant private collector and art dealer, Giovanni Bettanin,[956] added more than 1000 first-class and rare objects to the Asian and Oceanic collection of the *Néprajzi Tár (Ethnographic Exhibition, now the Museum of Ethnography)* in 1899 and

[955] Gábor Wilhelm: 'The Asia and Indonesia Collections' In.: János Gyarmati: *Taking them back to my homeland... – Hungarian collectors – Non-European Collections of the Museum of Ethnography in a European Context*, Museum of Ethnography Budapest, 2008., pp. 162-164.; 354-361.

[956] Bettanin was originally from Vicenza in Italy and spent about 25 years in Singapore from the early 1870s, where he worked as a merchant and world traveller. During this time he collected ethnographic material and built connections with other European collectors such as Ferenc Hopp. When he later returned to Europe, he offered his collection for sale in Budapest, likely on Hopp's recommendation. The museum's experts valued the material highly, particularly its Oceanic and Southeast Asian ethnographic pieces, and made arrangements to acquire it – with help from Hopp to finance the purchase at favorable terms.

1904. Together, the purchased collection included 76 Japanese objects, 26 ivory carvings, 8 ceramics, a book and a set of tusks, 37 sculptures, 2 masks, and a parasol.[957]

With respect to regional urban centers, the *Kassai Múzeum* (*Museum of Kassa* – today Košice, Slovakia) deserves mention. The museum developed from a private collection and originated from the holdings of painter and graphic artist Ignác Klimkovics, along with donations from local collectors. In 1903, the museum held approximately 30–40 items related to Japan. These Japanese-related objects were donated by Klimkovics and other local Hungarian donors, including Leó Moskovics, Károly Rottauscher, Viktória Lipcsey, György Kontz, Rozália Muszka, Zsigmond Bubics, and Bertalan Szinnyei. The collection included 19th-century Japanese utensils, 17th–19th-century Japanese ceramics and porcelain, as well as European-made blue enamel objects in the "Japanese style" from the 17th–19th centuries, including pieces from Schlaggenwald, Vienna, Meissen, and Delft.[958]

Collections related to Japan (woodcuts, paintings, and other applied art objects) were popular among Hungarian painters, too: István Csók and József Rippl-Rónai, among others, had such collections, from which an *Oriental exhibition (Keleti Kiállítás)* was organized at the *Művészház (Artists' House)* in April 1911.[959] Many Austro-Hungarian artists engaged with Japanese art through largely autodidactic and opportunistic means, using the works they acquired as informal "tutorials". Recognizing its strong didactic potential, numerous Austrian and Hungarian artists began collecting Japanese objects. Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele assembled notable collections, while in Hungary several artists are known to have owned Japanese works. Lajos Kozma,

[957] Wilhelm Gábor: *A Néprajzi Múzeum japán gyűjteménye*. In: Határtalan Régészet - Archeológiai magazin, pp. 46-49.
[958] *A Kassai Muzeum gyűjteményeinek leíró lajstroma*. Kassa, Koczányi Béla Könyvnyomdája, 1903.
[959] Rippl-Rónai's Japonistic influences were more restrained than those of his French colleagues. According to art historian Katalin Gellér, Japanese ink drawings and engravings played a more significant role in his artistic self-discovery than previously assumed. At the 1900 World's Fair in Paris, Jenő Radisics purchased Kanpō Araki's painting *Peacock*, which had won a silver medal at the exhibition. This work went on to have a direct impact on several of István Csók's paintings in the last third of the 1910s. Gellér Katalin: *Japán és a Hold között – a japonizmus Magyarországon*. In: Gellér Katalin – Dénes Mirjam: *Japonizmus a magyar művészetben*, KOGART Budapest, 2017., pp. 41.; 55. In the nineteenth century, Westerners came to associate peacock feathers directly with Japan. See: Martha Chaiklin: *The Flight of the Peacock, or How Peacocks Became Japanese.* In: Martha Chaiklin, Philip Gooding, Gwyn Campbell: Animal Trade Histories in the Indian Ocean World. Springer Nature, 2020, pp. 277-314.

and Ödön Faragó built significant collections, now largely preserved at the Hopp Museum. Elza Kövesházi-Kalmár displayed a kakemono in her Florence studio, and photographs suggest that Tihamér Margitay likewise collected Japanese artefacts. Although Japonisme struggled to enter the long-established and conservative art academies of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, newer and more flexible institutions, such as the *Országos Mintarajztanoda (Hungarian Royal Drawing School)* in Budapest and the *Krakow Academy of Fine Arts*, incorporated Japanese art into fine art education. Founded in 1871, the *Hungarian Royal Drawing School* built a library that included Japanese woodblock prints and illustrated books; by 1900, its holdings had increased significantly and consisted largely of Meiji-period works. Although the exact sources and uses of these materials remain unclear, two teachers were notably connected to Japanese art. Bertalan Székely's artistic legacy – he was the painter of *Japanese Woman* (1871) and a key figure in shaping the school's early library – suggests a strong interest in Japanese visual culture that may have influenced his teaching.[960] Viktor Olgyai, who also taught graphic art at the *Mintarajztanoda*, collected Japanese woodcuts.[961] (An exhibition of the remaining pieces of the woodcut collection of the Hungarian Royal Drawing School was held in Budapest in 2009.)[962]

During the early years of the Dual Monarchy, there was significant industrial art–related interest in Japanese products. From the Compromise to the end of the century, three major industrial museums were established in the Kingdom of Hungary: the *Technológiai Iparmúzeum (Museum of Technology and Industry)* in Budapest, the *Székelyföldi Iparmúzeum (Szekler Industrial Museum)* in Marosvásárhely (now: Târgu Mureș in Romania), and the *Kolozsvári Iparmúzeum (Industrial Museum in Kolozsvár, now Cluj-Napoca in Romania)*. At the time, the term "industrial museum" had a broad meaning in government thinking and consistently encompassed three types of institutions: museums of applied arts and crafts, industrial museums, and museums of the East, all explicitly dedicated to modernization. The first was responsible for aesthetic

[960] Mirjam Dénes, Györgyi Fajcsák, Piotr Spławski, Toshio Watanabe: *Japonisme in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy*. Museum of Fine Arts–Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, 2020. pp. 101-102., 108-109.
[961] Gellér Katalin: *Japán és a Hold között – a japonizmus Magyarországon*. In: Gellér Katalin – Dénes Mirjam: *Japonizmus a magyar művészetben*, KOGART Budapest, 2017., pp. 23.; 51.
[962] The exhibition was held at the *Képzőművészeti Egyetem (University of Fine Arts)* between 30.09.2009.-22.10.2009.

education, the proper selection of colors and materials, and the presentation of stylistic works of art across various branches of the arts and crafts. The second illustrated the materials, tools, and machinery used in different industries – that is, raw materials, industrial equipment, and finished products. The third, the so-called *Keleti Múzeum (Eastern Museum)*, was planned to promote industrial goods produced in the Balkans, which were becoming increasingly important for Hungarian exports, and to provide sample collections and product demonstrations in the region's newly formed nation-states. However, this museum was never actually established in its planned form,[963] and its intended functions were largely assumed by the *Budapesti Kereskedelmi Múzeum (Budapest Commercial Museum)*. This museum contrasted with Vienna's *Orientalisches Museum*, which quickly became more of a Wunderkammer[964] than an industrial development tool.

The *Kolozsvári Iparmúzeum (Industrial Museum in Kolozsvár)* emerged in the 19th century as a defining cultural, social, political, and economic institution of the modern era in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The collection strategy of industrial museums focused on the modernity and commercial value of objects, as well as on industrial development. The operation and logic of industrial museums differed so fundamentally from those of typical contemporary institutions that it is more accurate to consider them 'quasi-museums', functioning as a combination of *innovation center*, *experimental laboratory*, and *commercial showroom*. The founding of the *Franz Joseph I Industrial Museum* in Kolozsvár (now: Cluj-Napoca in Romania) was driven by the wave of industrial and economic modernization at the turn of the century. As a result of national industrial development and economic, social, and educational modernization, industrial and applied arts museums accounted for more than half of all Hungarian museum foundations and constructions during the last two decades of the 19th century. These institutions typically combined museum and educational functions. Geographically, they were concentrated in Transylvanian cities considered important for

[963] Its counterpart in Vienna was the *Orientalisches Museum (Oriental Museum)*, founded after Austria's East Asia expedition. It collected and exhibited applied-art objects from regions such as China, Japan, and Southeast Asia, and was later converted into a Trade Museum, with parts of its collection eventually joining what is today the Weltmuseum Wien.

[964] "cabinet of curiosities": a collection of rare, exotic, or unusual objects meant to amaze and display status rather than serve scientific or practical purposes

Hungarian national industry and culture. Another motivation for establishing industrial museums in Hungary was the belief – shared by many aristocratic politicians, industrialists, and entrepreneurs at the time of the Compromise – that rapid industrial catch-up was one of the state's most important goals. By the 1880s, the creation of industrial museums had become a notable aspect of industrial development strategies across the country. The establishment of the Industrial Museum in Kolozsvár coincided with King Franz Joseph's visit in 1887, after whom the museum was later named. During the period when the museum – along with associated construction-, metalworking-, and woodworking schools – was established, a collection of significant Japanese and Chinese objects was formed. One of the first specialized exhibitions following the museum's opening in 1887 was held for ten days in June 1889. The exhibition showcased the collection of János Vadona, a pharmacist and amateur geographer, who had acquired primarily modern industrial objects in Japan and China, according to contemporary press reports. János Vadona purchased objects in Japan and China for the Museum, where they became part of its core collection. Chosen for their affordability and quality, they were intended as models for Hungarian industrial development. The exhibited objects were mainly Japanese, with a smaller number of Chinese applied art and handicraft items, which were later incorporated into the museum's permanent collection. These included baskets, wooden spoons, boxes, spindles, plates, vases, and various woven objects. Handicraft items included porcelain cups, bowls, and papier-mâché plates. Other objects collected by Vadona included soapstone sculptures, carved ivory vases, carved boxes, painted wooden boards, and painted silk ribbons. In addition, the collection featured Japanese paintings and several hundred Japanese and Chinese photographs depicting everyday life with ethnographic significance. The Japanese and Chinese industrial art and handicraft items stood out from other exhibits in both quality and quantity. Vadona acquired these objects specifically on behalf of the *Industrial Museum* in Kolozsvár, aiming to present inexpensive, high-quality, marketable products that could be adapted to Hungarian production traditions and capabilities. The low price and excellent quality of Japanese items served as a model for industrial development at the time. Among the more expensive Japanese pieces were a "*Japanese decorative cylinder with openwork*

carving" valued at 70 pengős, and a "*cow cart carved from elephant bone in a Japanese casket*" valued at 100 pengős. Vadona's Japan-related collection, which considered industrial development, social aspects, and aesthetics, differed from typical collecting practices of the era precisely because of its explicit modernization goals. This approach aligned with the mission of the *Industrial Museum* in Kolozsvár, which was tied to the nation-building program through technological modernization and the development of domestic craft or home-based industries.[965] Our understanding of the Vadona collection is based on a 1942 Hungarian inventory of the *Kolozsvári Iparmúzeum*. Of the listed items, sixty-three Japanese and Chinese objects from János Vadona's collection are now preserved in the *Erdélyi Nemzeti Történelmi Múzeum (Transylvanian National History Museum)*.[966]

When we consider the reasons why these collections were accumulated in the first place, a discrepancy emerges between the original intention behind their formation and their actual utility. Their stated purpose was to stimulate the domestic crafts industry, yet this second phase – the practical application of the collections – never seems to have truly materialized. Concrete examples of the introduction and application of Japanese techniques are exceedingly rare. One such initiative was proposed in 1896, when the *Society of Applied Arts (Iparművészeti Társaság)* sought to introduce patination as a new branch of the applied arts – a technique that was reportedly unknown even in Paris and London at the time. To ensure the success of the project, the society planned to invite an expert from China or Japan. To cover the costs, it requested a grant of 2,000 forints from the Budapest City Council. Little is known about whether the plan was ever realized.[967]

Between the 1870s and 1880s, Hungarian ethnographic studies developed through university courses, the founding of the *Ethnographic Society*, and its journal Ethnographia, which actively supported the *Department of Ethnography*. Founded in 1872 with a single collection, the department was initially at a disadvantage compared to European museums. János Xántus was tasked with expanding Hungary's

[965] Székely Miklós: *Nemzet, ipar, művészet – A kolozsvári I. Ferenc József Iparmúzeum (1887–1918)*. MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézete, Budapest 2017. pp. 9-16.; 58-79.
[966] Székely Miklós: *Vadona János japán és kínai tárgyai az egykori kolozsvári I. Ferenc József Iparmúzeumban*. In: Nemzet és Tudomány Magyarországon a 19. században. BTK TTI Budapest, 2017. P. 214.
[967] Építő Ipar, 1896-02-05

ethnographic and natural history collections and proposed a national craft industry collection for the 1873 Vienna World Expo, but in the end, much of this material was assigned to the newly created *Iparművészeti Múzeum (Museum of Applied Arts)*. Overall, the *Néprajzi Múzeum's (Museum of Ethnography)* collections remained modest due to the limited availability of wealthy patrons to fund acquisitions and field research.[968] As for the Japan-related collection of the museum, two objects were added to the large Japanese collection of János Xántus as gifts. One came from the physician József Czapkay, one of the chief physicians of the Hungarian War of Independence in 1848: a model of a fisherman's house from Nagasaki. The other was a gift from Baron Eugen de Ransonnet (a Belgian painter and traveler who later moved to Vienna), recorded in the museum as a single item containing various paper samples. This item became part of Xántus's collection, although it had been purchased during the Austro-Hungarian expedition to East Asia by Ransonnet.[969] Photographs from the 1869 East Asian Expedition also form an important part of the Japan-related collection of the *Museum of Ethnography*. The collection consists partly of photographs taken by Wilhelm Burger, the expedition's professional photographer, and partly of photographs collected by János Xántus. The mission allocated a substantial budget for photography, reflecting its importance as a modern form of documentation. This emphasis was driven by Baron Karl von Scherzer, the mission's scientific and commercial leader, who arranged for Burger's appointment. Burger, already an exhibited photographer, was assisted by Michael Moser and supported by Baron Eugen von Ransonnet, who produced color drawings of about two hundred photographs, further enriching the expedition's visual record. Photographs of artworks were also taken in Japan. The *Museum of Ethnography*'s photo collection holds 90 such photographs of Japanese artworks, catalogued under inventory numbers F14922–15011. Since multiple copies were likely made of the photographs, a comparison of the 55 Wilhelm Burger photographs listed in the *Austrian National Library*'s online database with those in the *Museum of Ethnography* shows that 11 are identical or very similar to the photographs

[968] János Gyarmati: *The Museum of Ethnography and its exotic collections*. In: János Gyarmati (ed.): *Taking Them Back... - Hungarian Collectors - Non-European Collections of the Museum of Ethnography in a European Context*. Museum of Ethnography, Budapest, 2008. pp. 1-27.
[969] Wilhelm Gábor: *Xántus János japán gyűjteménye a Néprajzi Múzeumban*. In: Határtalan régészet, 2022/2. pp 56-58.

in János Xántus's collection. In addition to Wilhelm Burger's work, János Xántus collected and purchased photographs in Japan for the *Museum of Ethnography* in 1869, including what he described as "colored pictures of Japanese folk life". These were originally assembled in a two-volume album containing mostly hand-colored, carte de visite–sized portraits and genre scenes. The photographs were later removed from the albums. After Xántus's death, additional photographs from his estate were transferred to the Museum of Ethnography.[970]

On the Austrian side of the Dual Monarchy, there are parallel examples regarding museum founding. The *Austrian Museum for Art and Industry* (now the *Museum of Applied Arts, MAK*) opened in Vienna on 12 May 1864, housed in a former tennis court at the Hofburg. Unlike existing art collections in Vienna, its focus was on the applied arts, aiming to improve design quality and Austria's international economic competitiveness. Modeled on London's *South Kensington Museum* (today's *Victoria & Albert Museum*), it reflected mid-19th-century liberal ideals and a widespread admiration for British industry and culture. This influence extended beyond Vienna: the *Museum of Applied Arts* in Budapest, founded in 1872 with a government grant of 50,000 Forints, emulated both Britain and Vienna, using the 1873 World Fair in Vienna to build its initial collection. The *South Kensington Museum* also served as a reference for other museums established across Austria-Hungary during the late 19th century. The model quickly spread across the Monarchy, with institutions established in cities such as Brno (1873), Liberec (1873), Lviv (1874), Opava (1882), Prague (1885), and Pilsen (1895).

Private museums featuring Japanese artefacts also existed in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Hungarian Counts Ágost (Edmund) and József Zichy collected Asian artworks during their travels to Japan (1876), and in 1901 the family's holdings were presented as the *Zichy Museum*. The significance of the Zichy collection of Japanese objects in Budapest is that it became the basis of what was effectively Hungary's first private Oriental art museum, which was publicly accessible between

970

https://etnofoto.neprajz.hu/index.php/2022/09/23/diplomacia-es-fotografia/?fbclid=IwY2xjawOuVCtleHRuA2FlbQIxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzkxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeG3j7PVib_q_AMfflg4Ykwf0dk_0eiodV6B, https://etnofoto.neprajz.hu/index.php/2022/10/07/diplomacia-es-fotografia-ii/?fbclid=IwY2xjawOuU91leHRuA2FlbQIxMQBzcnRjBmFwcF9pZBAyMjIwMzkxNzg4MjAwODkyAAEeoTsa0SMknlVc_OYFc7WK9gQdJtjSez (accessed: 2026 Jan.)

1902 and 1906. In 1912, the collection was transferred to the *Museum of Ethnography*, where parts of it were later exhibited, while other items were dispersed through exchanges or transfers in the 20th century, including the exchange in 1978 that sent 96 Japanese pieces – mainly samurai swords and sword fittings – to the art collectors Émile Deletaille (Belgium) and Everett Rassiga (Switzerland). Today, the *Museum of Ethnography* in Budapest still holds a substantial portion of the collection, comprising around 322 Japanese objects, including spears, arrows and arrowheads, samurai swords and daggers with their fittings, other sword accessories, a rifle, a full suit of armor, a helmet and samurai hat, as well as sculptures, ceramics, and various metal objects.[971] The collection is particularly notable for its strong emphasis on samurai-related material and its high level of craftsmanship. Although inventory records primarily credit Jenő Zichy as the collector, Edmund Zichy also acquired Japanese objects, including through international exhibitions such as the 1878 Paris World's Fair. Plans to establish another Japan- and/or East Asia-related private museum in Hungary date back to the Hungarian entrepreneur Attila Szemere, who, after returning from Japan in 1883, considered setting up his own private museum; however, his project was never realized; his collection was later acquired by the *Museum of Applied Arts* and is now preserved at the *Ferenc Hopp Museum of East Asiatic Arts*.[972] Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria assembled a collection during his world tour (1892–1893) with the aim of creating a transnational folklore museum; it was first displayed at the Upper Belvedere Palace in 1894 before being moved to his private museum. The second private museum was created by the traveler Ferenc Hopp: in 1911, his East Asian collection, furnishings, and garden of Ferenc Hopp's villa – an early form of what is now the *Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts* – were mentioned among Budapest's private collections.[973]

As evidenced above, the foundations of Hungary's twenty-first-century East Asian collections were not built in museums alone, but through the efforts of early collectors whose acquisitions shaped the collections inherited by later generations. A

[971] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRkDIl7Sdbo (accessed: 2026 June)
[972] Mirjam Dénes, Györgyi Fajcsák, Piotr Spławski, Toshio Watanabe: *Japonisme in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy*. Museum of Fine Arts–Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, 2020. pp. 98-100.
[973] Pesti Napló, 1911-04-26

quick survey of Hungary's Japan-related collections in 2009 reveals that the largest collection was held by the *Ferenc Hopp Museum of East Asian Art* (recently renamed as: *Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts*) (7,000 items), followed by the *Museum of Ethnography* (3,400 items). In third place was the *Déri Museum* in Debrecen (400 items), while smaller collections of Japanese objects were scattered across the *Magyar Képzőművészeti Egyetem (University of Fine Arts)* in Budapest, the *János Xántus Museum* (renamed in 2013 as *Rómer Flóris Művészeti és Történeti Múzeum - Flóris Rómer Museum of Art and History*) in Győr, the *Ottó Hermann Museum* in Miskolc, the *Military History Museum* in Budapest, and the *Janus Pannonius Museum* in Pécs. It can be roughly estimated that all European collections (477 museums) held approximately half a million Japanese-related objects in 2009. The largest collections in the early 2000s were located in England (150,000 items), Germany (86,000 items), Italy (46,000 items), the Netherlands (41,000 items), Austria (38,000 items), the Czech Republic (29,000 items), and Switzerland (19,000 items). Hungarian collections are roughly on a par with those in Poland (12,000 items) and Sweden (12,000 items). It is also noteworthy that Romania held 5,000 Japanese objects in 2009.[974]

The Influence of Japonism(e) on Hungarian Painting and Graphic Arts

Japonism(e) did not play a particularly significant role in Hungarian painting, although there is a Hungarian work that can be regarded as one of the earliest examples of Japonism(e) worldwide. This is Bertalan Székely's (1835–1910) *Japanese Woman*, painted around 1871, a subject he later repeated in several versions. He was reportedly inspired to create the painting in 1871, when the natural history collection of the *National Museum* exhibited materials collected by János Xántus. According to Katalin Gellér's analysis, Székely's *Japanese Woman* combines elements of Orientalism and Japonism. The painting originally bore the title *Chinese Girl*. Székely's sketchbook reveals that he made preliminary studies for the work based on Hokusai's manga. Art historians assume that Székely had already noticed the growing popularity

[974] Bincsik Mónika: *Japán műtárgyak gyűjtéstörténete Magyarországon a 19. század második felében – kitekintéssel a nemzetközi összefüggésekre*. Phd thesis, 2009., ELTE, pp. 7.; 15-16.

of Japanese prints during his travels in Western Europe in 1864. In reality, the painting depicts a European-looking woman in a Japanese setting, with an interior constructed by subtly blending European and Eastern representational traditions. According to Gellér, this approach displays more deliberate observation than comparable English and French works of the period, which were often based on photographs and adhered to Western compositional conventions even when portraying Japanese subjects. The painting thus represents a transitional form and cannot be clearly classified either as a costume-based Orientalist work or as a formally innovative one. Rather, it reflects the incorporation of characteristic compositional elements of Eastern art – a "cautious innovation" marked by a nearly imperceptible interplay of naturalism and illusionism.[975]

Bertalan Székely: Japanese Woman (1903)

Bertalan Karlovszky (1858–1938) produced works reflecting the influence of early Japonism(e), such as the *Gitározó nő (Woman Playing Guitar)* and the *Olvasó nő (Woman Reading)*. Karlovszky became well known in Parisian art circles at a young age. His bourgeois genre paintings were widely reproduced as colorful prints and even used as fan decorations, while his historical costume paintings were purchased directly from his studio by European and American collectors. Many of his works have since been lost. *Woman Playing Guitar* is a particular rarity, created during Karlovszky's most productive period in Paris and imbued with Japanese artistic influence. The painting was shown in 1895 at his first exhibition in Budapest, where it received both critical and

[975] Gellér Katalin: *Japán és a Hold között – a japonizmus Magyarországon*. In: Japonizmus a magyar művészetben, KOGART Budapest, 2017., pp. 29-30.

public acclaim. Karlovszky's early portrait style drew on a synthesis of Holbein, Utamaro, and Whistler – combining classical Renaissance elements, stylized Japanese art, and subtle realism. *Woman Playing Guitar* and *Woman Reading* display the characteristics of early Japonism, when East Asian art was still primarily referenced through the material culture depicted in the works. The vogue for Japanese aesthetics can also be traced in the works of Karlovszky's contemporaries, including Ignác Újváry, Tihamér Margitay, and Gyula Tornai.[976] Gyula Tornai (1861–1928) studied painting in Munich and at Gyula Benczúr's master school in Budapest. Although he initially focused on genre scenes, after extensive travels in Asia – including India and Japan – he turned to 'exotic subjects'. His stay in Japan likely took place in December 1905. Unfortunately, we do not know the exact route of his journey. After his return, the Vasárnapi Újság newspaper reported on his trip in an illustrated article on the occasion of his exhibition in Budapest in 1909:

> "*He had long been drawn to the land of the Hindus, but even more so to the empire of the Mikado, Japan. The cannons were already booming on the shores of Korea when he landed in Yokohama. Fortunately for him, he found a powerful patron in Count Okuma, a former Japanese prime minister, whose portrait was his first work painted in Japan. This influential nobleman, a great reformer of modern Japan, sent him on his way with a letter of recommendation that opened doors for him that would otherwise have remained closed to Europeans*".[977]

When Tornai returned from Japan, he received a *Tosa album* illustrating the novel *Genji* as a gift.[978] During his trip to Japan, he painted a portrait of Shigenobu Okuma,[979] the founder of Waseda University, which is still preserved in the university library's collection.

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[976] Révész Emese: *Karlovszky Bertalan: Nő mandolinnal*. Kieselbach Galéria és Aukciósház, 2003. 04. 11.; https://web.archive.org/web/20040912155340/http://www.kieselbach.hu/cgi-bin/kieselbach.cgi?MENUID=HIREK&HIRID=349&ARCHIV=&KATID=244 (accessed: 2025 Nov.)

[977] Vasárnapi Újság, 1909. 56. évf. 41. sz. p. 850.; Kovács Ágnes: *A táncoló gésa – Adalékok Tornai Gyula japán tárgyú képeihez* – Magyarok Münchenben 6., Artmagazin, 2008/2, p. 58. Translated by the author.

[978] In the collection of the Ferenc Hopp Museum of East Asian Art

[979] Politician, Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1868, served several times as Minister of Finance, and was Prime Minister of Japan in 1898 and from 1914 to 1916. He founded Waseda University in 1882.

Gyula Tornai: Shigenobu Okuma, portrait[980]

His art was highly popular with the public in his own time; his exhibitions in Bombay, London, and Paris attracted large audiences, and his paintings sold quickly. At the same time, he faced sharp criticism from Hungarian reviewers for what they described as his "*cold-hearted observation of the wonderful Eastern world*".[981] Abroad, however, he was received more favorably, and one Parisian newspaper, the *Journal des Arts*, even featured him in its art criticism:

> "*Tornai stands out in the way he uses solid and well-organized brushwork to convey the immense power of colors. His brush, radiating vitality, embroideres the silks filled with arabesques and the satin playing in various colors with a slightly clumsy seriousness. It is well known that it is difficult to paint the elephants emerging from the caves of Nasik and the tiny details of the Japanese princess's dress visiting the temple with unwavering enthusiasm, but this dress is made of much finer material than the temple itself, and this is the difference that Tornai forgot to convey. However, the falling garlands of white and mauve purple acacia flowers show that the Hungarian painter is excellent at depicting this effect. And with the help of our imagination, we can dream of an ideal, imaginary world where everything is covered in marble, gold, and porphyry, with flowering*

[980] Post Card Waseda University Collections, 近代絵画シリーズ、早稲田大学所蔵, Portrait of Okuma Shigenobu（大隈重信肖像）, Photo by HIROSHI Saito.
[981] Kovács Ágnes: *A táncoló gésa – Adalékok Tornai Gyula japán tárgyú képeihez* – Magyarok Münchenben 6., Artmagazin, 2008/2, p. 56. Translated by the author.

and balsamic vines twining everywhere, behind which graceful and mysterious female silhouettes glide longingly and passionately, like a gypsy rhapsody…"[982]

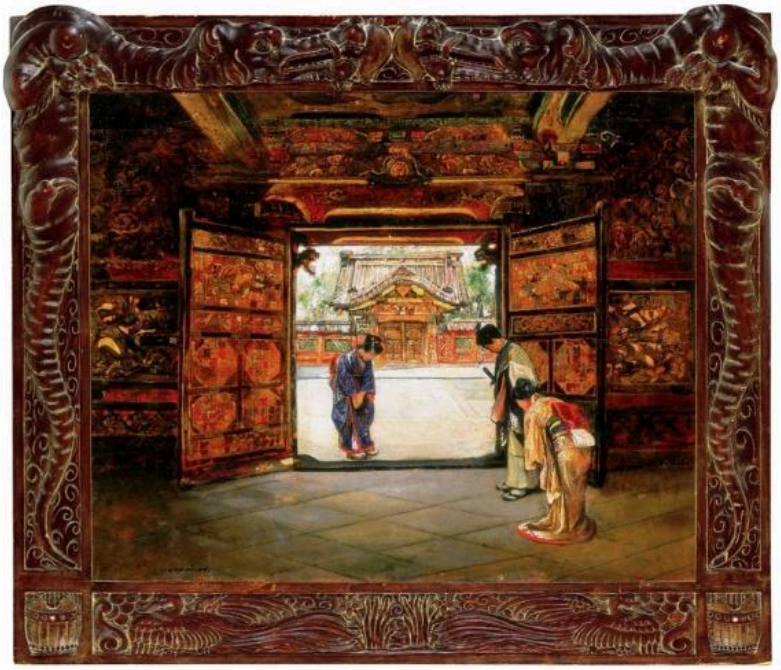
The painter was an intriguing figure in the art world:

"*Tornai, a character straight out of a salon novel – rumored to have amassed fabulous treasures in India – and his bizarre paintings stood out as foreign elements amid the progressive artistic movements of the early twentieth century. His taste and style hovered on the borderline of everything, like an unraveled thread, sometimes causing uneasy uncertainty even among those who were otherwise self-assured. His works belonged to the realm of curiosities, and yet – or perhaps because of this – they captivated the interest of his contemporaries*".[983]

One of Tornai's most beautiful works is *Gésák (Geishas)*, set in an artistic frame of his own design. Tornay's popularity, especially his Japan-themed paintings, still attracts great interest: at an online auction in 2022, his work titled *Cherry Blossoms in Japan* was sold for 2.5 times the starting price, ultimately fetching 12 million forints (approximately €31,000), and securing a place among the top three highest hammer prices at that auction.[984]

[982] Cited and translated to Hungarian by Ágnes Kovács in Kovács Ágnes: *A táncoló gésa – Adalékok Tornai Gyula japán tárgyú képeihez* – Magyarok Münchenben 6., Artmagazin, 2008/2, p. 59. Translated by the author.
[983] Kovács Ágnes: *A táncoló gésa – Adalékok Tornai Gyula japán tárgyú képeihez* – Magyarok Münchenben 6., Artmagazin, 2008/2, p. 57. Translated by the author
[984]

https://bav-art.hu/sajtokozlemenyek/kozel-3-millioert-vettek-meg-a-veteran-csepel-motort-a-legdragabb-ekszerert-22-milliot-fizettek/ (accessed: 2026 June)



Gyula Tornai: Geishas. (oil on canvas; in a frame designed by the artist)

JAPÁN ÉS INDIA
TORNAI GYULA
KÜLÖN KIÁLLITÁSA A MŰCSARNOKBAN
OKTÓBER 10-24-IG NYITVA NAPONTA 9-4-IG
BELÉPŐDÍJ 1 KORONA. VASÁR ÉS ÜNNEPNAP D. U. 1-4-IG 40 FILL
ORSZÁGOS MAGYAR KÉPZŐMŰVÉSZETI TÁRSULAT.

A poster for one of Tornai's exhibitions

A refreshing exception to the male-dominated field of painters is the Hungarian weaver and painter Carla Undi (1881–1956), a member of the eclectic *Gödöllő Art Colony (Gödöllői Művésztelep)*, who incorporated Japanese stylistic elements into her watercolours, most likely created around 1909.

In addition to the paintings, artistic graphics gained popularity among the public from the 1890s, thanks to artists' associations, publishers, and art writers who elevated minor art forms to the status of major arts. The Arts and Crafts movement and the rise of peintre-graveur helped consolidate graphics as a respected genre. Japanese woodcuts influenced the development of graphic art from the 1870s, notably contributing to the revival of color lithography and the Art Nouveau style, with French poster art emerging as a prominent example. Emil Orlik, a Prague-born woodcut artist, began working with woodcuts in 1896 and published Kleine Holzschnitte 1896–1899 in 1900, citing Nicholson, Vallotton, and Otto Eckmann as influences. That year, he traveled to Japan to study woodcut techniques and uniquely engraved his own works, unlike the Japanese practice of dividing the process among specialists. His approach influenced the Vienna Secession (1902–1905) and had a significant impact on Hungarian artists. The stylistic and technical renewal of color lithography was also driven by a deeper understanding of Japanese woodcuts. The *École des Beaux-Arts* organized an exhibition of Japanese engravings in 1890 and an exhibition on the history of lithography in 1891. From the perspective of the evolution of Hungarian graphic arts, exhibitions where the public could view Japanese woodblock prints were particularly significant. The catalog of the 1901 exhibition *Színes modern metszetek (Colorful Modern Engravings)* mentioned plans to exhibit a collection of Japanese woodcuts, but this depended on the completion of the *Museum of Fine Arts*, which was still under construction. Ultimately, this did not happen, but the Budapest public was able to see Japanese prints in 1908 at the exhibition of Count Péter Vay's Japanese collection at the *Museum of Fine Arts*; in 1909, a large collection of Japanese woodblock prints was featured at the major graphic arts exhibition at the Art Gallery; and again at the 1911 Oriental exhibition.[985] Eszter Földi notes that the formal influences of Japanese art were most evident in the works of Viktor Olgyai and his students, especially in linoleum cuts

[985] Földi Eszter: *Sokszorosított grafika a magyar képzőművészetben 1892–1914.* 2008. ELTE PhD, pp. 25-60.

and Kálmán Tichy's color aquatint prints. Viktor Olgyai's first works in linoleum, included as illustrations in his 1907 booklet *A grafikai technikák (Graphic Techniques)*, depict a village. The small-scale *Havas falucska* (*Snowy Little Village* 1907) reflects the influence of Japonism(e), with its uniform, patchy composition, completely flat effect, and pale, golden background. It is perhaps Olgyai's most decorative work. József Rippl-Rónai, the peintre-lithographe who developed his love of lithography under the influence of the Nabis and Toulouse-Lautrec, began creating color lithographs in Paris in 1894, which were considered highly modern in the mid-1890s. When Rippl-Rónai distanced himself from Munkácsy's painterly approach in the early 1890s, his principles regarding graphic and applied arts underwent significant changes in line with his Parisian orientation. In his memoirs (*Rippl-Rónai József emlékezései*, 1911), he recounted the Gauguin exhibition held at Café Volpini in 1889 and the Japanese woodcut exhibition at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in 1891. József Rippl-Rónai's studies for *Les Vierges* (1895) showcase his mastery of lithography through varied techniques and numerous color variations, ranging from soft, blurred effects to strong, decisive contours. These prints, which display both experimental and balanced compositions, are associated with Japonism(e). Following the earlier generation of painters influenced by Japonism(e), Gyula Tichy also explored the intersection of painting and graphic arts. In the early stages of his career, he focused on painting, although his works were primarily influenced by renowned graphic artists Walter Crane and Alfons Mucha, as well as Gustav Klimt. His experiments with woodcut printing resulted in *Nő virággal* (*Woman with Flowers*, 1907) and *Múzsa csókja* (*The Kiss of the Muse*, 1907). These works, printed on brownish paper, are still somewhat rough, although the Japonist-style *Női fej virággal* (*Woman's Head with Flowers*) is considered to be a delicate, well-executed composition. Gyula Tichy's linoleum prints were created between 1908 and 1912–1913. They are predominantly single-color engravings – intense indigo, green, or brown – printed on yellowish or brownish Japanese paper. The works are characterized by the spatial structure of Japanese woodcuts, the omission of conventional spatial representation, and the complete filling of the surface. The initial line-based compositions, reminiscent of ink drawings, were replaced around 1909 by works based on patches; by 1910, the lines returned, almost entirely covering and filling

the pages. The figures, often layered atop one another, evoke the structure of Japanese engravings and, above all, the paintings of Gustav Klimt. Next in line is Elza Kalmár Kövesházi from the early 1900s. Born in Vienna, she began her studies in drawing there and then continued her education in Munich. In 1900, she moved to Paris, and between 1902 and 1903, she lived in Florence. She appears to have worked with graphic art (printmaking) only for a few years at the beginning of her career, between 1901 and 1903, after which her interest shifted to sculpture. In addition to lithography, she also experimented with algraphy (aluminium-based lithography). With one exception, the prints produced in 1901–1902 are landscapes in a Japonist, Art Nouveau style. The algraphy entitled *Vihar (Storm*, 1901-1902*)* features decorative lines of boat masts reminiscent of Japanese ink drawings, with a bridge in the background standing out against the charcoal-like details. The artist achieved the subtle coloring of this Japonist work using only three colors – pale yellowish brown, white, and black – layered on top of one another, giving it an almost monochrome character. One of the first practitioners of early woodcut art in Hungary was Gyula Conrád. Among the relief prints produced before 1914, his works stand out for their rich themes and delicate execution. He was both a woodcutter and an engraver. Conrád created a seaside landscape *Tengerpart (Seashore,* 1910*)* in the style of Japanese woodcuts. The next Hungarian artist is Ervin Raáb, who began his career with copperplate engravings but found that the aquatint technique best suited his pastel painting style. His work *Híd Törökkanizsán* (*Bridge in Törökkanizsa*, 1911) is reminiscent of Japanese woodcuts. Kálmán Tichy's Japanese-style colored aquatint prints, though few in number, are notable for their unique themes and technical mastery. Many depict flowers and plants, reflecting Japanese woodcut influences and Art Nouveau ornamentation, with a flat, stylized composition and harmonious color schemes. He also applied this approach to a single-color print of *Chatting market women* (*Beszélgető kofaasszonyok*, 1911), where only the figures and their goods appear, and to a dynamic sailboat scene (*Scylla*, 1910), demonstrating his ability to create harmony between stylization and subject matter. Béla Erdőssy's prints from around 1909 follow the characteristic Olgyai-inspired style of depicting autumn and winter tree-lined avenues, as seen in *Havas út (Snowy Road)* and *Ősz (Autumn)*. The slightly later *Fasor* (*Tree Line*, 1910) and *Víz mellett* (*By the Water*,

1912) show the influence of Japanese woodcuts. They were made with the golden ochre underprinting typical of Viktor Olgyai, and the combination of white, gold, and gray colors creates a harmonious, albeit slightly melancholic, impression. The thin Japanese paper reinforces the volatile, delicate nature of the sheets. Finally, two Hungarian artists from this period deserve mention. One is Dezső Tipary, whose Japonist-style *Csónakok a parton* (*Boats on the Shore*, 1908) is somewhat clumsy in its lines but captivating in its overall effect, particularly the blue of the sky. The other is Jenő Edvi Illés, whose engraving *Virágok* (*Flowers*, 1913) depicts a bouquet against a white background using only overlapping colors. While the composition follows traditional still-life conventions, the flat, decorative style is reminiscent of Japanese engravings.[986]

By the late 1890s, Hungarian poster art had become firmly established, reaching its Art Nouveau peak with strong Japanese influence. Hellmann Mosonyi-Pfeiffer, in particular, adopted the flat colors, bold outlines, and spatial composition of Japanese woodcuts. This period also saw leading designers such as Géza Faragó – whose decorative style was shaped by his time in Mucha's Paris studio – and Mihály Biró.[987]

Early Agoras of Commercial Japan-Fever in the Kingdom of Hungary

The Japanese influence in the Hungarian territories of the Monarchy was not limited to painting, art collecting, or exhibitions. In 1877, majolica manufacturer Ignác Fischer opened a new business venture, a porcelain-painting manufactory in Budapest, which he later developed into a renowned majolica factory. Until the 1880s, he produced majolica that incorporated a mixture of Japanese, Chinese, and other East Asian motifs. Later, a kind of general commercial Japan-fever grew out of Japonism, driven in part by underlying business interests. As a result, 'Japan' came to permeate nearly every sphere of life, from Japanese-style rooms in Hungarian castles to contemporary coffee-house culture. If we look for parallel examples, we can mention France, where Japanese objects were used primarily as decorations and accessories due to their 'exotic' character. The fashion for 'Japanese salons/rooms' in the interiors of the

[986] Földi Eszter: *Sokszorosított grafika a magyar képzőművészetben 1892–1914.* 2008. ELTE PhD, pp. 87-123.
[987] https://budapestposter.com/a-kezdetek-szecesszio-es-voros-propaganda-1895-1919 (accessed: 2026 Feb.)

Parisian bourgeoisie was noted as early as the late 1880s in the diary of the writer Zsigmond Justh. At the 1909 international graphic arts exhibition at the *Műcsarnok (Kunsthalle)*, visitors encountered a so-called "*Japanese room*", and a separate 'Japanese room' was also created for the 1910 spring international Impressionist exhibition at the *Művészház (Artists' House)*.[988] In this regard, the collections of the Esterházy, Pállfy, Teleki, and Zichy families are noteworthy.[989] The Esterházy Palace in Fertőd reflected one of the most luxurious courts in Europe under Prince Miklós Esterházy, whose nickname "the Magnificent" reflected his extravagant spending on luxury and decoration. The palace featured fashionable chinoiserie, influenced by his education in Leiden and his European travels. A notable object from the Esterházy collection is a lacquered ladies' table once thought to be a 19th-century European imitation, but later found to contain 18th-century Japanese urushi lacquer, likely reworked in Europe. The palace features rare Chinese lacquer wall panels, originally part of screens later cut up for decorative use. (These were extremely expensive – ten panels cost about 1,000 Rhenish gold florins, compared to Joseph Haydn's annual salary of 783 florins.) Other 'Japanese rooms' were installed in the castles of those who had traveled to Japan: for example, the castle of Count Géza István Mailáth in Csitár–Gárdonypuszta, built in 1895, contained Japanese souvenirs, weapons, and porcelain brought home from his journeys.[990] It is true that during this period interiors were not purely Japanese in style; rather, they were often labeled 'Japanese' for the sake of overall effect.[991] It is also clear that Chinese and/or Japanese-style furniture and furnishings found in the historicist castles of the era primarily appeared in women's salons, owing to their perceived feminine character. The number of such rooms

[988] Gellér Katalin: *Japán és a Hold között – a japonizmus Magyarországon*. In: Gellér Katalin – Dénes Mirjam: *Japonizmus a magyar művészetben*, KOGART Budapest, 2017., pp. 11-13., 27., 89.
[989] Bincsik Mónika: *Japán műtárgyak gyűjtéstörténete Magyarországon a 19. század második felében – kitekintéssel a nemzetközi összefüggésekre*. Phd dolgozat, 2009., ELTE, p. 27.
[990] Most of the seating furniture and decorative cabinets were Chinese and Japanese products manufactured for export to Europe. A picture of the room can be found on page 7 of the August 15, 1905 issue of Szalon Újság. See: Óhidy Viktor: *Főúri lakáskultúra Magyarországon a dualizmus időszakában*. ELTE, Phd thesis, Budapest, 2007. pp. 75-76.
[991] *Japanese rooms* in the West were richly decorated spaces that blended plush upholstery, red-and-gold accents, Turkish carpets, and an assortment of Asian-inspired items – from pottery and bronzes to bamboo details and tasseled lanterns. Although assumed to be authentic, these densely furnished rooms were really imaginative, slightly uncanny interpretations that captivated viewers. Their style went on to shape Western design, and Japanese craftsmen contributed to the craze by producing furniture and objects that matched these Western expectations, further muddying the sense of what was genuinely Japanese.

increased significantly around the turn of the century. József Törley, for instance, had a Japanese room decorated with lacquer inlays in his castle in Budafok. In 1912, the dining room of the Nákó Castle in Nagyszentmiklós (now: Sânnicolau Mare, Romania) housed a collection of ancient Japanese porcelain. Japanese vases were present in the castle at Zsombolya–Csitó (now: Jimbolia, Romania), owned by Count Endre Csekonics, grandson of General János Csekonics, founder of the Hungarian State Stud Farm. Japanese artworks likewise found a place in the Nádasdi Castle in Nádasdladány. Baron Ádám Bánffy kept Japanese porcelain bowls in his castle in Válaszút (now: Răscruci, Romania), and he himself painted bowls and plates imitating Japanese styles.[992]

Towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, coffee-house life was more vibrant than ever, with some 600 coffee houses operating in Hungary by 1900. These establishments were integral to bourgeois life and served as important gathering places for the domestic art world. In the 1890s, the *Japán Kávéház (Café Japan)* opened on the corner of Liszt Ferenc Square and Andrássy Avenue in Budapest – or, as contemporaries put it, "*where Gyár Street meets the eighth wonder of the world*".[993] The café took its name from the 'Japanese paintings' that decorated its majolica-tiled walls.[994] By 1910, it had become one of the cafés frequented by the leading figures of Hungary's artistic, literary, and intellectual circles. Its noted regulars included journalists, artists, and prominent members of the art scene. In 1931, Ernő Szép recalled the café in the following words:

> "*We had a café on Andrássy Avenue in those kinder times: the Café Japan, with white majolica walls painted over with bamboo, chrysanthemums, vases, and dreamlike birds. (…) Those of us who went there went perhaps further than if we had gone to Japan; this café was more remote and exotic than the world of white*

[992] Sisa József: *Kastélyépítészet és kastélykultúra Magyarországon a historizmus korában*. Akadémiai doktori értekezés. Budapest, 2004., pp. 103., 188., 193., 207., 241.
[993] Pesti Napló, 1894-01-09. Translated by the Author.
[994] The owners of *Írók Boltja (Writers' Shop)*, which currently operates on the site of the former Japan Café, renovated the interior in November 2009 and were surprised to find that the old café's bamboo and fan stucco from the late 1920s had survived the passage of time in relatively good condition. The original stucco details can be seen on the ceiling of the shop, and a display case in one corner of the shop preserves the objects that were used in the café. Old photographs are also on display there.

lotuses, green tea, and golden Buddhas: because the Café Japan was a fairyland of the young".[995]

An interesting account comes from the travel diary of Japanese poet Yoshikata Ikebe, who described what happened when a group of Japanese visitors stopped at the Café Japan in 1900:

"*Night walks taken in European cities offer a pleasure that is almost unimaginable in our country. (…) Such are the coffee houses, where crowds of guests spend their evenings. There is a place in this city called Café Japan. We stopped here at the beginning of our walk. Of course, we couldn't eat Japanese food, but the room was filled with scenes from Japanese history books and images of Japanese life. (…) However, we felt that something was missing in the clothing and appearance of the people in these scenes: they were European, which seems particularly strange, given that this country separates East and West. As our small Japanese group entered the café, the manager, the waiters, and the numerous guests immediately fixed their gaze on us. After sitting down at a table, we ordered drinks, as was our custom. We had barely begun to drink when a waiter approached us with four or five business cards in his hand. It turned out that their owners were local people who, upon seeing that we were Japanese, wished to meet us. (…) Eventually, they came over to us one after another, until we found ourselves in a rather unusual gathering. As they drank, they became more talkative and asked us questions about Japan. They were especially interested in the constitution and the political system, and to their great satisfaction, they received detailed answers from Mr. Kamei, who is well versed in these subjects. There was lively discussion about customs and religion. They told us that the Hungarians were originally Asian people themselves and hinted that they resented the great powers, thus trying to win our sympathy. Among them were officials, nobles, and teachers. We became deeply engrossed in conversation and were ready to depart, but they showed no intention of leaving. We explained that we had to continue our journey that night, said our farewells,*

[995] Budapesti Negyed 2001. 2-3. sz.; Herman Lipót: *A művészasztal – a Japán művészasztal fénykora (1910-1920).* Translated by the Author.

and departed. I will never forget that we stopped at this café, which bears the name of our country and where we encountered foreigners."[996]

The *Japán Kávéház (Café Japan)* in Budapest even inspired a café owner in Pécs: Ferenc Pál Schwarz, the owner of the *Café Hungária*, sought to ride the popularity wave by decorating his own café in 1904 with 'Japanese-style' paintings and wood carvings, modeled after the Japan Café in Budapest.[997] In addition to the *Japán Kávéház (Café Japan)*, Budapest also had a *Kis Japán (Little Japan)* and a café called *Nippon*. Even in Arad (now in Romania), a *Japán Thea és Kávéház (Japanese tea and coffee house)* opened in the early 1900s. It is perhaps not surprising that not only cafés but also a cinema bore the name of Japan; it operated until the First World War.[998]

The Café Japan, 1907

[996] 池辺義象『欧羅巴』金港堂 1902. pp. 350-352. Translated by the author. The Japanese visited the café on October 24, 1900. Translated by the Author.
[997] Pécsi Közlöny, 1904.09.04.
[998] The cinema was built by the Schwarczer family. *Filmspirál*, 2001, 7. évf. 26. Sz.; "Japán Mozgó" was the name of this cinema. It was the first movie theater in Pestszentlőrinc, opened in 1912, closed as a movie theater in 1949.

Japanese tea and coffee house, 1909, Arad.

In 1905, another *Japán-kávéház (Café Japan)* operated in Ungvár, a county seat and local regional centre of the Kingdom of Hungary (today: Uzhhorod, Ukraine). It formed part of the *Japán-szálloda (Hotel Japan)*, which was opened by the wine trader Bernát Halpert.[999] (Other cities in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, such as Prague, had Japanese-style cafés like the *Yokohama Japanese Café*, designed by Joe Hloucha and his brother for the 1908 Jubilee Exhibition. Housed in a wooden building with a large torii gate, koinobori, and a small raised shrine, its interior combined Western furniture with Japanese wall decorations, including woodblock prints, hanging scrolls, mural paintings, and lacquer objects with gold inscriptions. Staff wore authentic kimonos and traditional Japanese hairstyles, and the café served both Japanese tea and local beer. Its popularity led to a relocation to Lucerna Palace, where it operated until World War I.)[1000] Another establishment with a Japan-related name was a restaurant inspired by the 1886 premiere of Arthur Sullivan's operetta *The Mikado* in Budapest. The *Mikado* restaurant operated until the early 1910s, and the building was demolished in 1912.

[999] Ung, 1905.06.11.
[1000] Mirjam Dénes, Györgyi Fajcsák, Piotr Spławski, Toshio Watanabe: *Japonisme in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy*. Museum of Fine Arts–Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts, 2020. p. 235.

Advertisement of the garden of the Mikado Restaurant from 1895

In the summer of 1912, a "*japán nyári szaletlí*" *(Japanese summer house)* opened in Szabadka (now: Subotica, Serbia). The building was located in the city centre, opposite the *Népbank (People's Bank)* on Eötvös Street, and was a wooden garden structure, a kind of summer pavilion with open sides and a roof.[1001]

Japan-Fever in Hungarian Literature, Urban Legends, Music, Theatre and Film: From Pages to Stages

In the Hungarian press and publishing circles, Japanese literature appeared in three ways: (1) translations of Japanese works (via intermediary languages, such as Dutch, German, French, English); (2) Western works on Japanese subjects translated into Hungarian (or, published in its original language); (3) and Hungarian translations of original Japanese literature (including Hungarian works of pseudo-Japanese literature). As is evident from the table in the ***Appendix*** *(see: Japanese Literature Translated into Hungarian)*, mediated literature (works based on information that reached Hungary through Western languages) played an important role. After 1869, Hungarian newspapers, journals, and books rarely contained Japanese literature: around two dozen such works are known. Direct translations from Japanese were few, and in the cases known to us from 1904 onwards, it can be assumed that the translator, Benedek Balogh Barátosi, received assistance from likely German-speaking Japanese

[1001] Bácsmegyei Napló, 1912. július 6.

individuals,[1002] as he did not possess a sufficiently high level of Japanese to translate literary works written in Meiji-era Japanese or earlier forms of the language on his own. Next to translations of literary works, there are approximately a dozen introductions, partial translations, and reports on Japanese theatre in the Hungarian press.[1003] Literary works about or related to Japan that achieved great success in Europe were, of course, also published in Hungary. The Hungarian translation of Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* appeared in 1875, and Lafcadio Hearn's short story collection *Kokoro* was published in 1909. The earliest novel written in Hungarian about Japan was penned by Arnold Vértesi[1004] in 1878, entitled *A fölkelő nap országa – regényes utazás Japánban (The Land of the Rising Sun – A Novelistic Journey in Japan)*. It is a fictionalized geographical/travel narrative compiled from contemporary foreign sources and travel accounts, designed for educational purposes. The story follows a Hungarian protagonist who, after leaving the Italian army, meets a former superior in Venice in 1872. The superior has turned to silk farming and plans to travel to Japan to learn sericulture (cultivation of silkworms for silk production). During their journey, they take aboard two shipwreck survivors, including an English girl whose father turns out to be in Japan, prompting them to search for him. The result is an entertaining, "edutainment"-style adventure novel. A younger audience was targeted by another short novel on the Russo–Japanese War: Ede Sas, journalist and editor, published *A fölkelő nap hősei – kalandok a japán-orosz háborúban (The Heroes of the Rising Sun – Adventures in the Russo–Japanese War)* in 1904. The popularization of Japanese tales in the West was largely attributed to Takejirō Hasegawa (長谷川武次郎), a Tokyo-based

[1002] These individuals included Professor Kotarō Yamaguchi (山口小太郎), director of the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages; Jūichirō Imaoka (今岡十一郎), a student of the German language; and a certain "Tasabu Katsura", who was accommodated in Barátosi's rented house while he was living in Japan during 1903–1904, and with whose help Barátosi compiled the section on Japanese culture, pedagogy, and literature for his book Dai Nippon. See: Baráthosi Balogh Benedek: *Japán, a felkelő nap országa. Baráthosi Turáni Könyvei.* Szerzői kiadás, Budapest, 1930.

[1003] Budapesti Szemle, I–II. kötet, 1873; Vasárnapi Ujság, 14 November 1875; Képes Családi Lapok, 8 March 1885; Fővárosi Lapok, 20 June 1891; Pesti Hirlap, 22 October 1893; Vasárnapi Ujság, 20 February 1898; Budapesti Napló, 23 May 1898; Művészvilág, 27 May 1900, etc… As the turn of the century approached, Western descriptions of kabuki (a Japanese theater known for stylized drama, elaborate costumes, dramatic makeup, and all-male casts performing both male and female roles) became clearer and more consistent. Most articles focused on the theater's structure, the unusual behavior of the audience, the all-day performances, the use of male actors, and the seemingly "childlike" quality of the dramatic action.

[1004] Arnold Vértesi was a highly prolific writer, producing about 1,500 short stories along with many historical and social novels. He was regarded as a gifted storyteller, known for engaging plots and an effortless, fluent narrative style.

publisher who produced Japanese-themed picture books for foreign audiences. From the mid-1880s, his successful Japanese Fairy Tales series and subsequent annual publications of Japanese stories and poetry made Japanese literature widely accessible. These volumes later became key sources for early 20th-century Hungarian translators, especially in poetry, where figures such as Jenő Heltai and Vilmos Pröhle often relied on Karl Florenz's translations published in the Hasegawa editions.

One particularly fascinating area of literary and cultural history research is urban legends,[1005] and unsurprisingly, such stories can be found in the history of Japan-Hungary relations. Let us examine a few examples. One of the earliest popular urban legends involving the Japanese circulated in the Hungarian capital in 1873. According to this legend, the Japanese delegation arriving at the World's Fair in Vienna sent a telegram to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, inquiring about the relationship between the Hungarian and Japanese languages. Contemporary satirical magazines treated the legend in a rather entertaining way.[1006] The other legend spread from Debrecen in 1907. According to reports, the news from Debrecen circulated through the capital's press, claiming that Japanese agents were seeking young Hungarian men aged 24–30 to entice them to emigrate to Japan. This was allegedly necessary to "replace" Japanese men and prospective husbands who had been lost in the Russo-Japanese War. The *Szentesi Lap* newspaper provided the following details on the matter:

> "*The Japanese government is reportedly looking for men to replace the male population lost in the war. The men would sign a five-year contract with Japan, under which they would travel to Japan at the state's expense and temporarily marry a Japanese woman with almond-shaped eyes. During the five years, the Japanese state would support the men at its own expense and pay 600 yen (one yen = 5 krones), or possibly 1,000 yen, for a son born of the marriage and 300 yen for a daughter. After five years, the man could return to his homeland at the state's expense, or he could remain in Japan as a citizen. (...) It is said quite*

[1005] Research into urban legends is difficult to squeeze into clear disciplinary boundaries. See: Miklós Ágnes Kata: *A városi legendák és szeptember 11-e – kutassuk, vagy ne kutassuk?* In: Tudományos Közlemények: A világ 2001 után (konferenciakötet). Általános Vállalkozási Főiskola, 2004., pp. 63-74.
[1006] For details, see: Chapter Six

explicitly that the worthy clerks of the municipalities of Csépa and Szelevény are involved in the matchmaking."[1007]

The *Szentesi Lap* asked the local deputy mayor to investigate the story in order to finally get a clear picture of the matter. There is no doubt that such an opportunity would have aroused the interest of domestic fortune hunters, whether it was true or not. Even stranger news stories circulated at the time, such as an article published in 1913 about a Japanese toddler who had been left in Hungary:

"*Osada Omaya, a Japanese child, was brought to Szeged by his traveling comedian parents when he was three and a half months old. Because they could not obtain a contract due to the child, they entrusted him to a woman in Rókus, who cared for the Japanese baby but could not save his life. The little one could not withstand the European climate and died. During their travels around the world, the parents always remembered their child left behind in Szeged and sent the exact amount of money for his upkeep, because they intended to bring him home to Japan when he turned two.*"[1008]

In the field of music, only a handful of works were created during this period in Hungary. But before examining the Japan-themed songs produced at the time, we should note a noteworthy phenomenon among some Hungarians who happened to overhear Japanese music on the streets. They appear to have experienced a kind of ethnocentric projection or déjà vu-like feeling when strolling through Japan or meeting Japanese people. Such a strange experience happened to Gábor Bálint, a Hungarian linguist, who was once in a tea house in Shanghai surrounded by Japanese women, and happened to hear a Japanese song.[1009] The rhythm and melody of it sounded, to his ears, exactly like a Hungarian folk song, which begins like this:

Van neki, van
Karika gyűrűje,
Barna szeretője.

[1007] *Fel Japánba!* Szentesi Lap, XXXVII. évf. 23. szám, 1907. feb. 22., p. 2. Translated by the author.
[1008] *A kis japán.* Magyar Földművelő 1913. ápr. 6. 6. szám p. 47. Translated by the author.
[1009] Bálint Gábor: *Minő fajúak a japánok (nipponiak)?* In Erdélyi Múzeum, 1894. XI. kötet, IX. füzet, p. 585.

She has She has
A wedding ring,
And a brown-haired lover.[1010]

The Japanese song he overheard, went, according to him, like this:

Jo naku jo
Yokohama,
Nagasaki, hai!

Bálint's Translation into Hungarian:

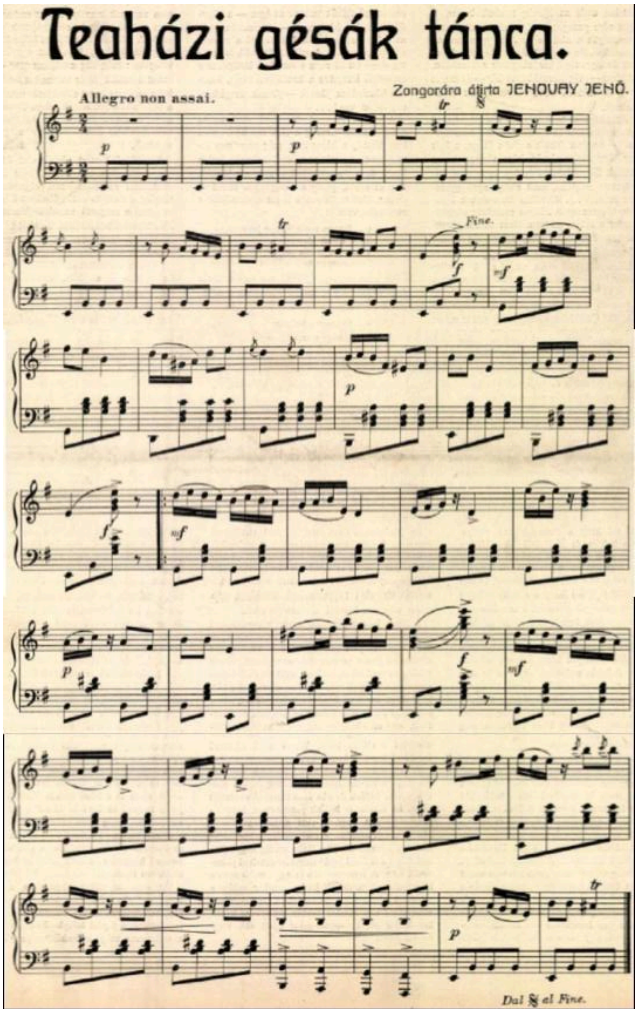
A nő sír utánnad
Ó, Yokohama és
Nagasaki városok

The woman cries after you
Oh, the cities of Yokohama
and Nagasaki

In the 19th century, music became a popular form of home entertainment in the West, especially among the middle class, fueled by the rise of private piano ownership. This led to a boom in sheet music sales, which were mass-produced and often featured exotic cover art and lyrics. Sheet music became a major form of popular entertainment, sometimes even more popular than opera or orchestral music. During this period, stage works with Japanese themes – mostly comedies – were published as sheet music and song collections, allowing audiences to enjoy them at home.[1011] In Hungary, examples of such sheet music are likewise found. A 1904 issue of the piano and violin journal *Zenélő Magyarország* published a new composition, *Banzai! A Grand Japanese Victory March (Banzáj! Nagy japán győzelmi induló)*, by the minor German composer Eugen

[1010] Translated by the Author.
[1011] Yuki Mitsuhira: *Japan as Portrayed in 19th-Century Western Music*. In: Oliver White, Mai Kataoka, Timon Screech: Global Japanese History and Culture - De-Isolating Japan from Past to Present. 2026. DOI: 10.4324/9781003674214-24

Sattelmair.[1012] Dezső Demény's *Japán zeneképek zongorára, két kézre (Musical Pieces from Japan for Piano, Two Hands)* was published in 1905. Another example is the two booklets entitled *Japán dalok (Japanese Songs)*, published in 1905 and compiled by Jenő Jenovay, a composer and traveler who visited Japan several times between 1890 and 1905. The collection consists of original Japanese songs that he transcribed on site while in Japan. The booklets contain the following pieces: *(1) Song of Spring; (2) Song of the Sailors; (3) Dance of the Tea House Geisha; (4a) Procession of Buddhist Priests to the Temple; (4b) Prayer; and (5) Farewell Song of a Japanese Girl to Her Beloved Going to War*. Jenovay adapted these songs for piano based on their original motifs.[1013]



Jenő Jenovay: The Dance of the Geishas at the Tea House, (Ország-Világ, 05 March 1905.)

[1012] Ung, 1904-11-27
[1013] Székely Nemzet, 1905, 23. évf., 20. sz, 1905.02.08.

One of the first original Hungarian musical comedies to feature Japan – though only through two characters: Zulejka, the Japanese singer, and Ibolya, the prima donna of the "Japanese cabaret" – was *A próféta álma (The Prophet's Dream)*, written in 1904 by Adolf Mérei, with music composed by Jenő Markus, and set in an imaginary world. Japan-themed songs became popular in opera, operetta and cabaret. One couplet song, titled *Fésű dal (Comb Song)*, was inserted into the American comic opera, *The Sho-Gun* in 1906. The lyrics of the *Comb Song* were written by Adolf Mérei, and the music was composed by Béla Zerkovitz. There was a creative part of this song which, according to the notes, "*should be played on a comb covered with silk paper*". The song's popularity is evidenced by contemporary newspaper reports, which note that Klára Kűry repeated it eight to ten times at each performance. During the Christmas holidays, the song was expanded with additional verses and playful audience-participation games.[1014] The *Fésű nóta* was also issued on record in 1911 among the new releases of the First Hungarian Record Factory.[1015]

Mérei Adolf - Zerkovitz Béla: Fésű nóta	Adolf Mérei - Béla Zerkovitz: Comb Song
Más országban a katonák	In many distant foreign lands
Hogyha fölvonulnak:	When soldiers go marching,
Cintányér szól! Dobot vernek!	Drums are beaten, cymbals clashing!
Trombitákat fújnak!	Trumpets blare so grand!
Itt Japánban a muzsikánk egész új sütésű:	In Japan our music is a novelty, you see:
Nem kell nékünk trombitadob!	We need no drum nor trumpet band,
Csak egy kicsi fésű!	Just a little comb for me!
Fésű, kicsi fésű! Hangja lágy	Paper comb, my little paper comb!
Bűvös bájos dallamú!	Magic notes, so sweet and warm!
Fésű, kicsi fésű! Hangja lágy	Paper comb, my little paper comb!
Bűvös bájos dallamú!	Magic notes, so sweet and warm!
Gésa lány az én szerelmem!	A geisha girl is my delight,
S nem kell magyarázni,	No need for words to say;
Hogy eljárok hébe-hóba	From time to time I pay a call,
Őhozzá teázni!	And sip her tea all day.
Édes ajkán mézes méreg karcsú szép növésű!	Her lips are honeyed poison, and her figure so slim,
Az ő selymes lágy hajából	From her silken, flowing hair
Van e kicsi fésű!	I took this little comb on a whim!
Fésű, kicsi fésű! Hangja lágy	
Bűvös bájos dallamú!	Paper comb, my little paper comb!
Fésű, kicsi fésű! Hangja lágy	Magic notes, so sweet and warm!

[1014] Budapesti Hírlap, 1906-12-25.
[1015] *Az Első Magyar hanglemezgyár novemberi újdonságai: Kűry Klára eredeti felvételei, 10141.: Fésű dal* (Zerkovitz); Zenekereskedelmi Közlöny, 1911-11-01.

Bűvös bájos dallamú!	Paper comb, my little paper comb! Magic notes, so sweet and warm!
Pénze minden virtuóznak Van ma milliónyi! Koncertjein sok pénzt keres Kubelik, Buzóni! Tán akad-e japánnak is impresszáriója? Én vagyok a fésűfújás Vecsery Ferkója!	Every virtuoso now Makes his millions real quick; Concert halls bring heaps of cash To Buzoni, Kubelik. What if my Japanese girl has found an impresario, The prodigy of comb and paper: Her very own maestro!
Fésű, kicsi fésű! Hangja lágy Bűvös bájos dallamú! Fésű, kicsi fésű! Hangja lágy Bűvös bájos dallamú!	Paper comb, my little paper comb! Magic notes, so sweet and warm! Paper comb, my little paper comb! Magic notes, so sweet and warm!
Tenoristák fejedelme, Női szíveket zúzó: Nem cserélek én tevéled Híres nagy Karúzó! Mert lehet a te magos Céd bárminő csöngésű: Majomházról sose beszél ez a kicsi fésű!	My Caruso, Prince of tenors, Every lady's heart-breaker, I would never trade with you, You, celebrated note-shaker! Whatever beauty rings from your lofty high C, This little comb will never sing Of monkey houses, you see!
Fésű, kicsi fésű! Hangja lágy Bűvös bájos dallamú! Fésű, kicsi fésű! Hangja lágy Bűvös bájos dallamú![1016]	Paper comb, my little paper comb! Magic notes, so sweet and warm! Paper comb, my little paper comb! Magic notes, so sweet and warm![1017]

Another couplet in which the Russo-Japanese War was mentioned appeared in 1907 and later became a popular song promoting cinemas at the time:

> "*Together in the dark they sat,*
> *Bertha and her young wooer,*
> *While on the screen in frantic spat*
> *The Jap, the Brit, the Russ, the Boer.*"[1018]

We know that a Western, Japanese romance-style song also appeared in Hungary. It was *Poppies – A Japanese Romance* by Neil Moret. Neil Moret was a pseudonym of Charles N. Daniels, a prolific American composer, publisher, and music editor known for creating popular ragtime pieces, romantic ballads, and ethnic-themed intermezzos. His

[1016] You can listen to the song here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lt3t5nDAQjo (accessed: 2026 Jan)
[1017] Translated by the Author.
[1018] Kálmán Imre – Heltai Jenő: *Dal a moziról*. 1907. Translated by tha author. You can listen to the song here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MewOF54XIRU (accessed: 2026 Feb.) Translated by the Author.

Poppies – A Japanese Romance (1904) clearly capitalized on the early 20th-century American fascination with exotic, Orientalist themes. The song was widely published in Europe, specifically in Germany (as *Mohnblumen – Japanische Romanze*) and the UK. It appeared on Hungarian gramophone records in 1907 and 1908 under the titles *Mákvirágok* and *Pipacsvirág*.[1019] Another song, a Hungarian chanson *Japán románc (Japanese Romance)* was written sometime between 1910 and 1912 by the cabaret writer Gyula Kőváry, with music by Mihály Nádor. This cabaret song had an interesting afterlife: its German version became a hit in Germany in the late 1920s: in 1926, Kurt Tucholsky rewrote the song and gave it the title *Ein Chanson*.[1020]

Kőváry Gyula - Nádor Mihály: *Japán románc* (cca. 1910-1912)	Gyula Kőváry - Mihály Nádor: *Japanese romance*
Van egy ország, egy kis apró, Japánhon az ő neve, Csöppek ott a házikók és Kicsi ott a nők szeme. Az örökzöld fák is aprók, Mint a hónapos retek. És az emberkék tipegnek, Mint megannyi kisdedek. Furcsa nékünk ez valóban Az ember nem hiszi, Hogy minden nagy itt Európában, Japánban meg pici!	There's a little tiny country, Japan is the name it's by, Where tiny are the houses And beady are the ladies' eyes. Evergreens are not bigger than Monthly radish in the spring, Little people toddle along Like babies do their babying. How strange it seems to us, indeed, One scarcely can recall That all is big in Europe And in Japan so small!
Rózsaliget hűs tövében Egy piciny madár dalol, Egy kis gésa lágy ölében Fess tengerész udvarol: Beszél neki Európáról, Ahol minden rengeteg, Városok és házak nagyok, S éppenúgy az emberek... Nem érti bár ezt a lányka De szívesen hiszi, Hogy minden nagy ott Európában, Japánban meg pici!	In a rosy grove's cool shadow A tiny little birdling sings, While on a geisha's gentle lap A jaunty sailor is flirting. He tells her of Europe, Where all is broad and grand, The cities and the houses, And likewise every man… The maiden scarcely understands, Yet trusts him, one and all, That all is big in Europe And in Japan so small!

[1019] https://gramofononline.hu/hu/search.php?sf=21&q=jap%C3%A1n+rom%C3%A1nc (accessed: 2026 Feb); Here is a list of similar songs from the 1900s: https://shinku.nichibun.ac.jp/kichosho/new/books/1000/mpv0400000000dq0.html (accessed: 2026 Feb)
[1020] Körner András: *Költők a kabarében*. Corvina, 2019., p. 64. The later German version is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhSXLykgAos; https://soundcloud.com/ledivo-1/und-in-japan-ist-alles-so-klein (accessed: 2026 Jan)

Nászindulót búg a gerle, Tűzvirágos rózsafán, És alatta csókba forr a Tengerész s a kis japán... Hogy aztán a folytatás is Vajjon olyan jól esett? Nem tudom, mert itt lezárul E kis mélabús eset! Kiderül, hogy mese minden, S már egyik sem hiszi: Hogy minden oly nagy Európában, Japánban meg pici![1021]	The turtle-dove hums wedding tunes On fire-flowered rose-tree boughs, And underneath, in mingled kiss, The sailor and the little spouse… Whether what came afterward Was pleasure, great or small, I cannot say, for here concludes This sentimental sprawl. It turns out all was but a tale, And now neither at all Believes that things are big in Europe And in Japan so small![1022]

During one of the many revivals of Sydney Jones' operetta *The Geisha*, a Hungarian stage director decided that the decade-and-a-half-old work needed something to liven it up. The choice fell on the music of Alexander's Ragtime Band, with the text taken from István Weiner's *Medvetáncz[1023] (Bear Dance)*. This is how a dance interlude became an inseparable part of the operetta. It was an instant hit in Pest and appeared in countless sheet music editions. And it was not just anyone who danced and sang the number – turned into a duet for the operetta – but the two Hungarian superstars of the era: Sári Fedák and Márton Rátkai (in 'kimonos', as was customary).[1024] The last song to be mentioned here dates from 1911. The Hungarian press mentions that in Endre Nagy's cabaret there is a song insert, a "poetic act", called *Japán dalok (Japanese songs)*,[1025] but beyond this brief notice, no further details are known.

As Japan and Japanese art became a hot topic in Europe, various Japan-themed lectures began to appear, attracting considerable public interest. It is likely that educational or entertainment lectures featuring Japan were already being held in the 1880s. The first Japan-themed performances are associated with Attila Szemere, who spent seven months in Japan in 1883 and, after his return, delivered a series of successful educational lectures. Szemere first lectured on Japan and Japanese arts in

[1021] Körner András: *Költők a kabarében*. Corvina, 2019., p. 290.
[1022] Translated by the author
[1023] Links to the original recordings of *Medvetáncz*:
https://hangtar.oszk.hu/gramofon/medvetancz-asszonykam-adj-egy-kis-kimenot/;
https://hangtar.oszk.hu/gramofon/medvetancz-kakastancz/ (accessed: 2026 June)
[1024] Thuróczy Gergely: *„Ha jő az éjszaka, mulatni kell!". Kuplékavalkád*, Napút, IX. évf., 2007/2, pp. 9–10. You can listen to the song here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qiCsXtOvgWc (accessed: 2026 Jan.)
[1025] Pesti Napló, 1911-04-09.

Budapest in 1884.[1026] The material from this lecture was published as a series of articles in the newspaper *Pesti Hírlap* in 1884. The first part of the article presented Szemere's personal impressions, while the second part offered information on Japanese lacquer art, sword making, metalwork, and ceramics. Szemere later held several more lectures, the most popular of which took place on March 18, 1904, at the *Museum of Applied Arts* and received exceptionally positive press coverage.[1027] He crowned his success with an even more ambitious event: a grand three-act reading at the *Uránia Tudományos Színház (Uránia Scientific Theater)* on April 23, 1904.[1028]

Poster for Szemere's lecture

Szemere's lecture was accompanied by 170 projected color images and 18 motion pictures[1029]. A report in the Pesti Hírlap newspaper provides a brief overview of the content and reception of the "play":

> "*Act I presents as much of Japan's thousands of years of history as we need to understand its great power today. (…) Act II depicts Japanese folk life. (…) Act III describes in great detail how Japanese women's hairstyles are created. In this act, we encounter motion pictures of street life for the first time, seeing the busy*

[1026] 10 February 1884, at Lipótvárosi Kaszinó; 7 March 1884 at Magyar Földrajzi Társaság
[1027] Magyar Iparművészet, 1904. 95.
[1028] The title of the presentation was: *Japán. Három felvonásban, 160 színesen vetített képpel, 18 mozgóképpel (Japan. In three acts, with 160 color images and 18 motion pictures)*.
[1029] https://uraniaresearch.com/2023/05/13/japan/ (accessed: 2025 Nov.)

ports and streets of Nagasaki, Tokyo, and Yokohama before our eyes. We marvel at the beginnings, development, and modern perfection of the Japanese navy. One motion picture shows how many soldiers can fit on a single giant ship; another shows cannon fire; a third shows a ceremonial parade; and the last depicts the gunfire of a real naval battle. Could Uránia have found a more timely topic than Japan, or a more skilled writer than Attila Szemere to write about it? Hardly. (…) Attila Szemere's personality sparkles in his engaging and meaningful presentation, which is so novel and enjoyable that it teaches those unfamiliar with Japan to appreciate and understand it. (…) The audience was enthusiastic not only about the play but also about the intelligent author, who was celebrated with enthusiastic applause after each act for his engaging work."[1030]

In the spring of 1891, the "*country's only world theater*", directed by Adolf Kiss, made a guest appearance at the Szentes fairgrounds. Japan appeared in the first act of the grandiose "*natural history and mechanical theater*", entitled *Nagy és regényes körutazás a föld körül 12 képben (Grand and Novelistic Journey Around the World in 12 Pictures)*.[1031] In 1901, Ferenc Gáspár, a naval doctor from the K.u.K. fleet, wrote a play entitled *Travel Around the World (Utazás a föld körül)*, which featured Japan. The production included 200 color slides and 12 motion pictures, drawn partly from Gáspár's own material and partly from the well-known traveler Ferenc Hopp. The highlight of the play was the second act, devoted to Japan, as the audience especially admired the images depicting Japanese women.[1032] Péter Vay, a traveler who spent some time in Japan in 1902, gave two long lectures after his return, in 1904, at the Museum of Applied Arts, on "*The Art of East Asia*" and "*The Influence of East Asian Artistic Taste on Western Europe*". These lectures later formed the basis of his book, published in 1908, *Kelet művészete és műízlése (Art and Artistic Taste of the East)*. The contemporary version of edutainment, or infotainment, maintained its popularity in subsequent years. Gyula Zombory (originally named Béla Kalmár, an actor and playwright), a journalist from Budapest and a war correspondent during the

[1030] Pesti Hírlap, 1904. április 24. Translated by the author.
[1031] Szentesi Lap, XXI. évf. 48. szám, 1891. ápr. 21., p. 4.
[1032] Hazánk, 1901. 142. p. 7-8.; https://uraniaresearch.com/2022/07/12/a-utazas-fold-korul/ (accessed: 2025 Nov.)

Russo-Japanese War, gave lectures on Asia, including Japan, at various Hungarian cultural institutions and schools between 1906 and 1912.[1033] According to contemporary reports, he presented an exhaustive and accurate panorama of Japan in an entertaining, narrative style. In his lectures, he discussed Japan's social and moral life, culture, geography, geology, architecture, industry, trade, economic conditions, education, religion, literature, and art. The lectures also touched on geisha and the social and moral status of Japanese women. He is said to have learned Japanese in nine and a half months, although he probably never visited Japan.[1034] It must have been a massive lecture that lasted for several hours, which was off-putting to a wide audience but appealed to enthusiastic listeners.

> "*It was a familiar sight at this evening's event that intelligence was very poorly represented at this extremely interesting, enjoyable, and informative lecture. This is nothing new for us, as intelligent audiences flock to the antics of slapstick comedians and tumbling clowns, while not placing much value on truly serious, meaningful, scientific, and educational presentations. Those who did attend the casino not only did not regret their participation in the lecture, but also expressed their sincere admiration and gratitude to the lecturer for the unparalleled enjoyment he provided the audience for a full four hours. (...) He was particularly concerned with the moral life of the Japanese people and with Japanese women, who were treated as pariahs and whose defenseless, sad fate moved many warm-hearted listeners to tears of sympathy.*"[1035]

The genre of edutainment shows began to gain popularity, thanks to the media coverage of the Russo-Japanese War. (During the war, Japan actively shaped its international image by hosting foreign correspondents, photographers, and cartoonists at the front while tightly controlling the reporting. The conflict – sometimes dubbed "World War Zero"[1036] because of its extensive global media coverage – became the first thoroughly documented modern war and presented Japan as a progressive, civilized

[1033] 1906: Debrecen; 1911: Schools in Gyula and the *Úri Casino*; 1908: Casino in Borosjenő (now: Ineu, Romania); 1908: Casino in Csaba; 1912: Reformed teacher training college in Debrecen. Debreczeni Újság 1906.04.05., Békés, 1911-02-12.
[1034] Buda Attila: *Messziről felmerülő, vonzó szigetek III.*, Ráció Kiadó, Budapest. 2014., p. 14.
[1035] Békésmegyei Függetlenség, 1908.03.11.
[1036] John Steinberg, Bruce Menning, David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, David Wolff, Yokote Shinji: *Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective – World War Zero*, Volume I. Brill, 2005.

nation.) Adolf Strausz's three-act play *Az orosz-japán háború (The Russo-Japanese War)*, interspersed with 170 (later 190) color projected images and numerous motion pictures, was presented more than two hundred times at the *Uránia Színház (Uránia Theater)* between **1905** and 1911.[1037] The play had an additional 48 provincial performances throughout Hungary. During the 200th performance – marking a first milestone of this kind since the Uránia Theater's founding – Strausz attributed the play's success to the "audience's sympathy for the hardworking and ambitious Japanese people". The performance was met with sustained applause, with the audience repeatedly breaking into approving cheers. He even asked the Japanese consul present to pass on the Hungarian audience's admiration to Japan.[1038] On April 15, **1910**, at the *Szabad Líceum* in Szabadka (today Subotica, Serbia), high school teacher György Bibó-Bige gave a lecture on Japan.[1039] On March 23, **1911**, the two-act work *Kína és Japán (China and Japan)* by Frigyes Lenk, a lieutenant in the Hungarian Army, premiered at the *Uránia Magyar Tudományos Színház (Uránia Hungarian Scientific Theater)* in Szeged.[1040] The humorous text was read by Dr. József Nagy, secretary of the *Uránia*, and was accompanied by Japanese songs, 73 color stills, and eight motion pictures.[1041] In the **early 1900s**, especially around 1909, educational performances at the *Uránia Scientific Theater* focused on world events, geography, culture, and new technologies. The program included presentations about foreign countries and cities (about 43 performances), such as in 1904: *Dalmatia, The Russian Riviera and the Caucasus, Japan, and The Masters of the World (England)*. There were also guest lectures (about 5), including appearances by Sadayakko in 1902, a Japanese actress. Lectures on warfare formed another major group (about 24 lectures). Because most

[1037] Uránia, 6. évf. (1905) jún-aug., p. 308.; https://uraniaresearch.com/2023/05/18/az-orosz-japan-haboru/ (accessed: 2025 Nov.); The production featured authentic photographs and motion pictures captured on the actual battlefields. The images were skillfully hand-colored by painter Carl von Zamboni von Lorbeerfeld, and the accompanying text was written by Adolf Strausz of the Oriental Trade Academy. Zamboni was well known for his role as Uránia's chief retoucher. For many of the early color-projected spectacles and slide shows at the theater, his hand-colored photographs provided the visual material. Contemporary press reports and reviews often praised the clarity, artistry, and meticulous coloring of these projected images – his work was regarded as essential to the success and visual impact of such productions.
[1038] Budapesti Hírlap, 1910-10-11
[1039] Káich K.: *Szabad Líceumok Bácskában és Bánátban*. 1979. p. 110.
[1040] *Főpróba az Urániában*. In: Délmagyarország, 1911. március 22. p. 4.
[1041] *A szegedi Uránia-szinházból*. In: Délmagyarország, 1911. május 5. p. 7.; *Lenk Frigyes darabja*. In: Délmagyarország, 1911. március 24. p. 4.

early motion pictures have been lost, knowledge about them comes from press reports and lecture scripts that recorded titles and occasional descriptions.[1042] Contemporary press accounts describe Japanese motion pictures shown at Uránia as depicting everyday life and busy streets. One notable example, reported in Pesti Hírlap in 1901, was a kinematograph piece filmed from a speeding express train approaching Tokyo, showing changing landscapes over a quarter-hour journey and ending at the city's largest railway station.[1043]

Along with edu- and infotainment theatrical lectures, more conventional theatrical and other performances were held in Hungary. It is possible that a minor Japanese performance took place in the early **1860s**, even before the Compromise. In the 1860s Pest, Károly Tüköry transformed his brewery garden into the dazzling *Újvilág (Neue Welt, New World)* dance hall. He leased it to a Viennese entrepreneur Johann Schottenhammer, who ran the venue, hiring 120 dancers and staging daring cancan shows, turning it into the first striptease and vaudeville (or orpheum) venue in Pest. The opening was packed and scandalously successful. Around **1864**, Schottenhammer added Parisian-style variety acts – French chansonnettes, acrobats, and an allegedly Japanese troupe called *Nishi-Yoshi*. While nothing is known about this troupe, if they were indeed Japanese, their performance could count as the first Japanese show at Pest's most unforgettable – and most infamous – entertainment venue of the early 1860s.[1044] The first major event to cause a sensation was a performance by a Japanese acrobatic troupe, which performed in Hungary in January **1868**, at the *Budai Népszínház (People's Theater in Buda)*.[1045] The European tour of the 24-member troupe managed by G. Wallace and E. Bert is relatively easy to reconstruct, as their major stops were listed in their advertisements. They first performed in Dublin, then in London – where they won the patronage of Queen Victoria – and made their Paris debut in October 1867. After Berlin, the troupe appeared in Hamburg and then in Vienna from December 1 at Renz's Circus, achieving enormous success despite mixed reviews in the press. This was followed by engagements in Graz and Trieste, after which they

[1042] Barnaföldi Anna: *Az Uránia képei*. DLA értekezés, Magyar Képzőművészeti Egyetem, 2023., p. 15.
[1043] Pesti Hírlap, 1901. 153. p. 10.
[1044] Kemény Gyula: *Artisták Pesthen és Budapesten (2. rész)*. In: Cirkuszi Akrobatika 9. évf. 4. sz., 2016.
[1045] Réthy Lajos: *A japáni sárkánytársaság mutatványai.* Vasárnapi Újság, 1868. január 19. pp. 28-29.

headed for St. Petersburg, stopping again in Vienna for a few performances, and finally arrived in Pest-Buda in early January. The premiere in Buda was barely half full, due to the rainy weather and infrastructure conditions. The performances were attended not only by the usual popular-theater audience but also by members of the Hungarian aristocracy. This troupe of strongmen and acrobats, which also included children, became known as the *Sárkány Társaság (Dragon Company).*[1046] In Hungary, they signed a contract for January 10–19, **1868**, which was eventually extended by three days. Their first performances were not without difficulties: some members failed to arrive on time due to a delayed train from Vienna, and there were numerous technical problems – poorly stretched ropes, failed jumps, omitted numbers, and an orchestra unable to play. Over the ten days, further incidents forced them to skip additional acts; the matinee on January 22 had to be canceled amid a minor scandal, and tickets were refunded after three Japanese acrobats became so drunk and fought so violently that they were unable to perform. Nevertheless, their reception in Buda reflected both a sense of superiority – some newspaper articles referred to them with derogatory terms such as “barbarian”, “foolish-faced”, or “monkeys”[1047] – and, at the same time, genuine enthusiasm that acknowledged the troupe’s performances surpassed those of European acrobats. Their juggling and balancing acts employed techniques that European performers had not yet mastered. Their most successful act in Vienna and Buda was the so-called “butterfly trick”[1048] (浮かれの蝶; 胡蝶の舞): the juggler created a butterfly out of white tissue paper and controlled it with a fan as if it were alive, letting it flutter and land on his arm, the fan, or a flower, then creating a second butterfly and guiding both at once. They also had a production specifically for Hungarian audiences, in which they played the *Rákóczi March* (which was rarely played in public during the Bach era) on Japanese instruments. This was most likely not the performers’ own invention, but an idea introduced by their managers or by the theatre. This was not the only culturally intersecting element of the program. At the height of the tricks, one member of the troupe would regularly shout “*Megvan!*” (“*Got it!*”) in Hungarian. Because of their

[1046] In Japanese, they are called Kakubeijishi (角兵衛獅子) or Echigojishi (越後獅子). A short film from the early 1900s showing their amazing performances has survived and can be viewed on YouTube under the title Japanese Acrobats 1904. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5t0ONMS65w; accessed: 2025 Nov.)
[1047] *Nefelejts*, 1868. január 26.; *Magyarország és a Nagyvilág*, 1868. január 18.
[1048] The trick can be seen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qu8Dla5rASU&t=183s (accessed: 2025 Nov.)

performance style, the troupe functioned both as stage artists and as a kind of ethnographic spectacle popular at the time.[1049] There was a Hungarian actor employed at the *Budai Népszínház* who had the opportunity to observe the Japanese Dragon troupe up close. He wrote the following about the group in his memoir:

> "*(...) the Japanese performed with excellent feats of acrobatics. One walked along a single strand of wire without a safety net, fanning himself, while another held a tall ladder attached to his waist. His partner climbed up and attached another ladder to the top of the first ladder, so that the two ladders formed an inverted "1". He went to the end of the upper ladder and performed the most daring moves there. All of his performances were like this. Otherwise, they often came to the performance laden with wounds: these tiny people used to stab each other; women did not perform with them. There was a very pretty little porcelain doll among them, named Omoto Sama; I wonder if she is still alive? But even if she is, she would no longer be a porcelain doll, but probably a crumbled crone.*"[1050]

In later years, various Japanese acrobatic troupes appeared on stages across the Hungarian Kingdom. In **1885**, Charles Arbre's show, the Torikata Imperial Troupe, performed in Budapest, Kolozsvár (now: Cluj-Napoca, Romania) and Nagyvárad (now: Oradea, Romania).[1051] In **1888**, audiences in Budapest and Nagyvárad were treated to performances by the Mitsuta acrobatic troupe[1052], and in **1889**, the Kamaritz group performed in Debrecen.[1053] In **1894**, 'Japanese swordsmen' performed to great acclaim on the stage of the Somossy Orfeum in Budapest. In **1895**, the same Somossy Orfeum advertised a new show featuring 'Japanese equilibrists' (tightrope walkers) accompanied by doves, cockatoos, and parrots.[1054] In subsequent years, many other troupes toured the Hungarian Kingdom: the Akimodos Royal Yeddo Troupe in **1901**

[1049] Across Europe, from the late nineteenth century into the early twentieth, public spectacles showcasing people of non-European origin became a widespread form of 'popular entertainment'. See: Teller Katalin, Molnár Dániel: *Show és Business Pest-Budán. Kötéljárók, önmozgányok és más világszámok*. Kiscelli Múzeum Budapest 2022., p. 48., 189.
[1050] Kozocsa Sándor (szerk.): *Kassai Viktor emlékezései*. Budapest, 1935. p. 158. Translated by the author
[1051] A Magyar Polgár 1885. július 18., 22., 23., 25.; Szabadság (Nagyvárad), 1885. július 29.
[1052] Szabadság (Nagyvárad), 1888. augusztus 4.
[1053] Debreczeni Ellenőr, 1889. december 11; 12; 14.
[1054] Budapesti Hírlap, 1895-04-02

(Budapest)[1055], the Fukushima troupe in **1902** (Budapest)[1056], the Riogoku troupe in **1909** and **1912** (Budapest)[1057], the Yukito Torō trio in **1909** (Arad)[1058], the Yamagata troupe in **1910** (Budapest)[1059], the Hamamura troupe in **1911** (Budapest)[1060], the Tenka troupe in **1911** (Budapest)[1061], and the Namba Troupe in **1911** (Budapest)[1062]. It must have been a sensation when Buffalo Bill's traveling spectacle, officially called Buffalo Bill's Wild West – a hybrid of historical reenactment, theatrical performance, and revue – visited Hungary in **1906**, performing in 25 cities in just over a month. Their two-and-a-half-hour spectacle of equestrian displays and cultural presentations, featuring performers from around the world, amazed audiences. Bill's Wild West shows, especially in their later, expanded forms, included Japanese performers – both artists and acrobats – as part of the international ensemble. They were often brought in to add an exotic appeal. According to the official program booklet for Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, the performances in Hungary included a demonstration of "*Japanese national games and acrobatic feats*".[1063] In Versec (today Vršac in Serbia), the performance highlighted 'Japanese warriors' dressed in samurai armor, while also showcasing the dramatic modernization of Japanese warfare, referencing real events such as the Russo-Japanese War.[1064]

Several Japanese theater companies gave guest performances in Budapest, the first arriving in February 1902. It was on this occasion that the Budapest audience first encountered Japan's earliest international superstar, Sadayakko Kawakami (1871–1946). The virtual debut of Sadayakko in Hungary occurred two years earlier, in October 1900, when Ödön Salamon's infotainment play, *Párizs (Paris)*, performed at the Uránia Theater and included projected images from Sadayakko's *The Geisha and the Knight* (or *La Ghésha et le Chevalier*), the work with which she and her troupe achieved

[1055] Pesti Napló, 1901-06-16., 1901-06-18, 1901-06-20
[1056] Budapesti Hírlap, 1902-10-07
[1057] Pesti Napló, 1909. március 7.; Budapesti Hirlap, 1912. június 2.
[1058] He was referred to as a "Japanese captain" and featured in marksmanship/shooting performances. He performed a 15-minute act with his female partner, often appearing between the acts of local operettas at the Summer Theater in Arad. Arad és Vidéke, 1907. július 6.
[1059] Budapesti Hirlap, 1910. május 19.
[1060] Színházi Hét, 1911. október 15–22.
[1061] Az Ujság, 1911.02.16, 1911.02.21.
[1062] Pesti Napló, 1911-06-04
[1063] Györe Zoltán - Perczel Olivér: *A vadnyugat sztárja a bánsági sztyeppéken*. In: LÉTÜNK 2016/4. pp. 25–52.
[1064] Neue Werschetzer Zeitung 1906. June 28.

worldwide fame at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle. Two years later, when the troupe performed in Hungary, the contemporary press reported on the event as follows:

> "*The Budapest audience at the Uránia Theater is now treated to a unique and interesting theatrical spectacle. A Japanese theater company is performing Japanese dramas – products of a culture completely different from ours – using artistic means that are entirely foreign to us. (...) The company has already visited most of Europe's capitals and has been met with interest everywhere. It appeared at the 1900 Paris World's Fair and stood out not only for its exotic character but also for its rare artistry, which was evident in its performances despite all its foreignness. Its leading actress, Sada Yakko, was praised as a first-rate artist by all who saw her; even by European standards, she is a true artistic talent and can make a powerful impression, especially through the realism of her acting. (...) Having had no predecessors in this field, Sada Yakko had to develop the tools of her art from scratch, and in this respect she must be counted among the pioneers. At the same time, she formed the first Japanese troupe to perform on European stages; until recently, Japanese clowns and strongmen had been seen at most in circuses, and the serious art of the eastern island nation was completely unknown. Sada Yakko is a small, slender, dark woman; her head appears relatively large, as do her hands. The peculiar stiffness of her face, painted completely white and red on stage, is almost frightening at first glance, and her slanted Japanese almond-shaped eyes appear even more slanted due to the makeup. Her mouth is pursed into a sweet, round shape that reveals her long teeth. This is how she appeared on stage, accompanied by a group of grotesque-looking actors whose faces were painted in such a way that they could easily be mistaken for masks."*[1065]

When Otojirō and his wife Sadayakko toured the U.S. in 1899, their original kabuki style proved incomprehensible to Western audiences. Otojirō adapted famous kabuki scenes to Western tastes, creating their most famous performance, *The Geisha and the*

[1065] Vasárnapi Újság, *Japáni színészek*, 1902. február. Source: Huszadik század internetes archívuma. http://www.huszadikszazad.hu/ (accessed: 2014) Translated by the author.

Knight,[1066] with Sadayakko as the lead, becoming Japan's first actress and the troupe's star. Their repertoire included *Kéza (Kesa),*[1067] *A sogin (The Shogun),*[1068] and *A velenczei kalmár (The Merchant of Venice),*[1069] performed in Budapest. Sadayakko's performances divided contemporary Hungarian opinion (more than 150 articles[1070] appeared in various media outlets, not only in Hungarian, covering Sadayakko's performance in Budapest). Reviews in newspapers of the time noted that few people were genuinely interested in the performances, and that the Japanese guest appearances were seen as little more than an exotic spectacle, featuring "*strange, monkey-like movements*" combined with "*nerve-wracking facial expressions*", which reportedly caused "*horror*" among the audience.[1071] In contrast, there were opinions that were positive, praising Sadayakko's perfect artistry, her "*picturesque acting*", and her husband's artistic creativity as astonishing.[1072] It can be said that the Hungarian press – just like other Western newspapers – viewed Sadayakko's performances through a series of oppositions: European versus Japanese, developed versus primitive, and realistic versus stylized, often in a simultaneously acknowledging and exclusionary manner. This division of opinion is interesting because contemporary audiences were watching one of the first intercultural theater performances, which Otojirō Kawakami had adapted to meet the expectations of Western audiences. Regardless of the mixed press opinions, their performance was a clear success, helped by prior reports that had reached the capital – particularly that Sadayakko could die on stage with remarkable realism, a feat noted by most of the press. During the Kawakamis' performances, a

[1066] It was a romantic drama in which a geisha, spurned by a samurai disguised as a knight who has a fiancée, seeks revenge. She pursues the couple to a Buddhist temple, impresses the priests with her dancing to gain entry, and attacks the bride. The samurai restrains her, and when she realizes he no longer loves her, her heartbreak leads to her death in his arms.
[1067] A reworking of the legend of Gozen Kesa (袈裟御前), which appears in the Heike Monogatari. Kesa and her samurai lover, Moritō, swear their love for each other, but while he spends years at war, Kesa marries another man at her mother's behest. When Moritō returns, he seeks revenge on his rival, but Kesa switches places with her sleeping husband, and her samurai lover kills her by mistake.
[1068] The play, first staged in London in 1901, depicts a fictional 14th-century power struggle between Shogun Yoshinori Ashikaga and his younger brother Yoshiaki. Sadayakko played Yoshiaki's wife, who goes mad believing her husband has been murdered. In the end, Yoshiaki survives a clothing swap with his servant and returns to avenge his brother.
[1069] The play, also performed as Sairoku (Shylock), was a condensed Japanese adaptation of Shakespeare's original, emphasizing the trial scene and incorporating melodramatic elements.
[1070] Koósz István: *A japán színház Magyarországon - Bibliográfia.* Budapest, 2019.
[1071] Budapesti Hírlap 1902. Február 3. pp. 11-12.
[1072] Magyar Nemzet 1902 Február 26. pp. 1-3.

controversy erupted in the press. It centered on a conflict of interest involving László Beöthy, director of the National Theater, who managed the Japanese troupe as a private entrepreneur while still heading the National Theater. On the first night, he personally supervised ticket sales at the *Uránia Theater*, where the normally 16-krone eight-seater box on the ground floor was sold for 70 krones. Beöthy was also accused of taking a 20,000-krone government advance to fund the venture. This combination of excessive ticket prices, profiteering, and competing with his own institution sparked public outrage and widespread newspaper criticism. It is characteristic of the age that there was a sarcastic aftermath to the Beöthy scandal, when a fictional telegram from a fake Sadayakko appeared in *Hazánk* newspaper, humorously recounting the reasons that led to Beöthy's downfall in a short poem ending with a playful calembour – a pun on Sada Yakko's name:

> "*My dear impresario! You deserve my most painful impression. Why did you choose to learn harakiri from us? Oh, if you were not the victim of our Japanese tragedies! Won't even the Chinese walls of the Hungarian cliques offer you refuge? Is there no mandarin pigtail for you to cling to? May this song console you: He who ruled us on the Hungarian plot / Behold, he's shattered, like a Japanese pot! / Curses on grim bureaucrats galore / I weep each morning till my eyes are sore! / Though you are so spiteful, so sad, I yuck, oh! / I'll be forever yours, your Sada Yakko!*"[1073]

This was not the only controversy surrounding Sadayakko. She and Loie Fuller appear to have had a long-running rivalry that culminated in a legal dispute in Budapest over payment for a Sunday performance. Fuller argued that Sadayakko should receive only a reduced fee. Sadayakko retained Dr. Jenő Lánczi as her lawyer, while Fuller was represented by Dr. Ármint Neumann. Rather than taking the case to court, the parties agreed to submit the dispute to an arbitration tribunal that included the Opera's artistic director and other members. The outcome of the arbitration, however, is unknown.[1074] Sadayakko's fame reached far beyond her own performances. She is believed to have

[1073] Hazánk, 1902. április 12. The original version of the poem in Hungarian: "*Ki minket vezérelt a magyar parcellán, Imé, eltört, miként japáni porcellán! Átok sok bírói zord bürokratára, Sírok minden reggel, mig bírok rátára! S bár átkot szór sokra a te szád ajakkó, Örökre szívébe zár hű Száda Yakkó!*". Translated by the author.
[1074] Pesti Napló, 1902-03-01

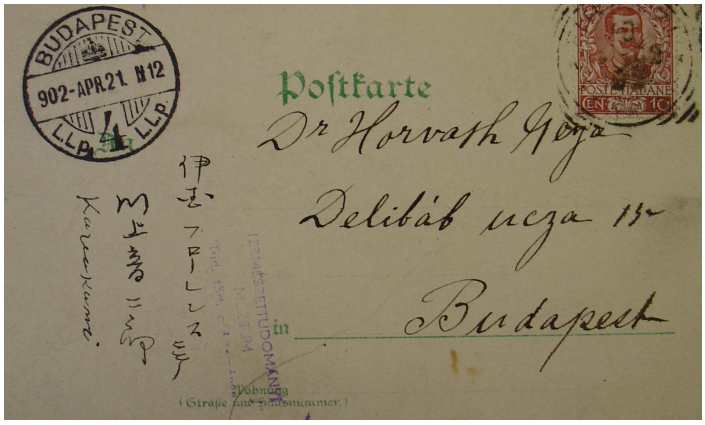
inspired Puccini's Madama Butterfly (1904), which later became a great success at the Hungarian Opera House. During the opera's American tour, a Hungarian singer, Elza Szamosi, sang the lead role of Cio-Cio-San. Géza Csáth saw the work several times and wrote the following in his review, published in 1908:

> "*Ethnographies and travelogues cannot tell us as much about Japan as Puccini does in this first act, even though he may never have seen Japan. Or even if he did, what he saw could not have told him more than his imagination. (...) Is this Japanese music or Italian music? No. It is Puccini's, who was born Italian and tells us about the Japanese*". [1075]

The Kawakamis, after leaving Hungary, sent a postcard from Italy – the next stop on their European tour – to Géza Horváth, a Hungarian professor of entomology. Horváth had met the couple at their performance in Budapest, along with the Japanese scientist Matsumura Shōnen, who acted as an interpreter for the actor couple.

Postcard sent from Italy by Otojirō Kawakami with Sadayakko

[1075] Csáth Géza: *Puccini*. Nyugat, 1908/22. Translated by the author. Puccini's opera and its plot later inspired the poet Gyula Juhász, who wrote a poem entitled *Pillangó kisasszony (Miss Butterfly)* in 1910.



Back of the same postcard

Handwriting of Sadayakko and Otojirō Kawakami from 1902

Long after Sadayakko had left Hungary, the Hungarian press revisited her celebrated European career. In 1911, Árpád Pásztor, following a visit to a theater school in Japan, published an article debunking the actress's supposed authenticity.:

> "'*Tell me something about Sada Yakko and Hanako' I asked theater directors, writers, and journalists in Tokyo. The little Japanese people laughed, their sparkling almond-shaped eyes looking at me with a mischievous gleam, as if to say, 'You poor, poor, deceived European!'. 'Why are you laughing?' I asked again. 'What's so funny about me asking about Sada Yakko and Hanako?'. 'Oh,' replied one of them politely, as if apologizing for his audacity in enlightening me, 'Sada Yakko and Hanako don't exist... That is, they only exist in Europe, they*

don't exist in Japan, the Japanese don't know them, no one here has ever seen either of them perform.' 'Is that possible?' I looked at them in amazement. 'Of course it is! There are no Japanese actresses, no actress has ever appeared on a Japanese stage, all female roles have been played by men, so Sada Yakko and Hanako's 'Tokyo troupe' is a lie. We may know Sada Yakko's name from European advertisements and from the fact that her husband is a local newspaper reporter. The little Japanese artist who caused a sensation in Europe was a geisha and singer in her homeland, married a skilled journalist, who took her to Europe and made money out of her. She had success, but it is a lie that Sada Yakko represents Japanese acting. Sada Yakko cannot represent Japanese acting because there are no actresses in Japan. And Hanako and her troupe are completely unknown to us. They may be clever imitators of Sada Yakko's business idea. It will be years before real, professional Japanese actresses can go to Europe to perform as guest artists. Because now, this year, the first drama school that trains women for a career in acting has opened in Tokyo. This movement is part of Japan's great modern reform, and members of the Diet are enrolling their daughters in the school to serve the idea of progress. Also this year, the Imperial National Theater is opening in Japan, and graduates of the drama school will be able to become members of this new theater. They will be Japan's first female actors."[1076]

Another actress, Hanako – referred to as a star of Japanese theater even brighter than Sadayakko – and her three-member troupe performed in Budapest in 1908 and 1913, as well as in other cities across the Kingdom of Hungary in 1910 and 1911. She was perhaps the only Japanese actress at the time to travel to so many locations – 22 in total – within the Kingdom. The strong audience interest was evident in the fact that ticket prices were raised everywhere, yet performances still sold out. Before turning to Hanako's performances, it is worth briefly considering her remarkable life, whose many ups and downs reflected the turbulent realities of the early twentieth century. She

[1076] P. Á. Vasárnapi Újság, *A japán színház.* 1911. március. Source: Huszadik század internetes archívuma. http://www.huszadikszazad.hu/ (accessed: 2025 Nov) Translated by the author.

was born in Gifu, Japan, in 1868 to a farming family and, unlike her contemporary Sadayakko, never performed on stage in Japan as an adult. Due to poverty, she was given up for adoption in 1875 to another struggling farming family, who eventually sold her to a traveling theater company, where she learned acting and dancing as a child. After returning home, she continued performing to support her adoptive family but eventually ran away and became a geisha apprentice. By age 16, she became a geisha, gaining early experience in various performing arts that laid the foundation for her later acting career. In 1901, lacking financial support or connections, Hanako responded to an advertisement from a Belgian merchant seeking performers skilled in Japanese music and dance and joined a Japanese troupe for the 1902 Copenhagen Ethnographic Exhibition. (Such ethnographic exhibitions, often held at zoos, were well-established and popular across many European cities.)[1077] In the summer of 1902, Copenhagen Zoo held a Japanese exhibition featuring a recreated village where performers, including Hanako, acted as "living educational objects" to showcase Japanese life, customs, and appearance. Little is known about their real identities or occupations, as the audience focused on spectacle. East Asian performers were regarded more favorably than African or Australian participants and were contracted and paid. Women played a central role, often appearing as "mother with child" to reinforce tradition or as dancers to embody exotic, sexualized stereotypes. Hanako, a former geisha, fit the latter role and performed dances at the exhibition, following the patterns of previous ethnographic shows. Later, in 1904, Hanako joined a 16-member troupe for an exhibition in Düsseldorf, performing dances and staged scenes. The troupe then traveled to London, where Loie Fuller[1078] discovered them. Nine months later, after a performance in Marseille, the troupe disbanded. Some members returned

[1077] The first major ethnographic exhibition of this type was launched in the 1870s by Carl Hagenbeck (1844–1913), a German wild animal trader and zoo pioneer who later founded the modern Tierpark Hagenbeck in Hamburg. In 1874–1875, at the suggestion of a friend, he exhibited indigenous Sámi herders alongside a herd of reindeer, complete with tents and traditional equipment, attracting large crowds and inspiring similar displays across Europe. Over time, what began as attempts to recreate everyday life for distant peoples increasingly blurred into staged scenes and repetitive performances that emphasized spectacle over authentic context. Another Japanese village, opened in Knightsbridge in 1885 also belongs to this genre. The artificially created village was a typical ethnographic exhibition, where a thousand Japanese men, women, and children were presented to the public with authentic shops, teahouses, shrines, and theaters.

[1078] Loie/Loïe Fuller (1862–1928) was an American dancer, choreographer, and theatrical innovator. She moved to Paris in the 1890s and became a leading figure in the Art Nouveau scene.

to Japan, while Hanako pursued an independent career. Some time later, she wrote to Fuller for help after being exploited by a dubious impresario in Antwerp, performing in a cheap concert hall. Fuller sent her secretary, Kaoru Yoshikawa – later Hanako's third husband – to rescue her and bring her to Paris. Thanks to Fuller's connections, Hanako, along with three other Japanese actors, was offered a new performance opportunity, with Fuller ensuring the shows were accessible even to audiences unfamiliar with Japanese. A notable feature of Hanako's shows, unlike those of other Japanese troupes of the era, was that the plays were performed entirely in Japanese. This reflected the impresario Loie Fuller's decision, from the outset, to reject the idea of the actors speaking English or French, citing their "foreign and distorted pronunciation". Fuller, impressed by Hanako's previous successes, created her first original performance, *Galatea!*, blending pantomime and melodrama. Drawing on Greek mythology, Japanese performance traditions, and the "Japanese doll" stereotype, the play established Hanako's stage persona and shaped audience expectations. It was followed by *The Martyr* and *A Yoshiwara Drama*, which became central to her repertoire, with *The Martyr* running thirty consecutive performances.

Hanako's tour in the Hungarian Kingdom, 1910-1911 (by Petra Doma)[1079]

These productions launched Hanako's international career, leading her to tour across Europe, the U.S., and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Fuller continued to write new

[1079] Doma Petra: *„A kicsiny asszony zsenijétől megkapva…" Hanako magyar körútja és a japán színház autentikusságának kérdése 1910 és 1911 között*. In: Távol-keleti Tanulmányok 16/1 (2024), pp. 121–142.

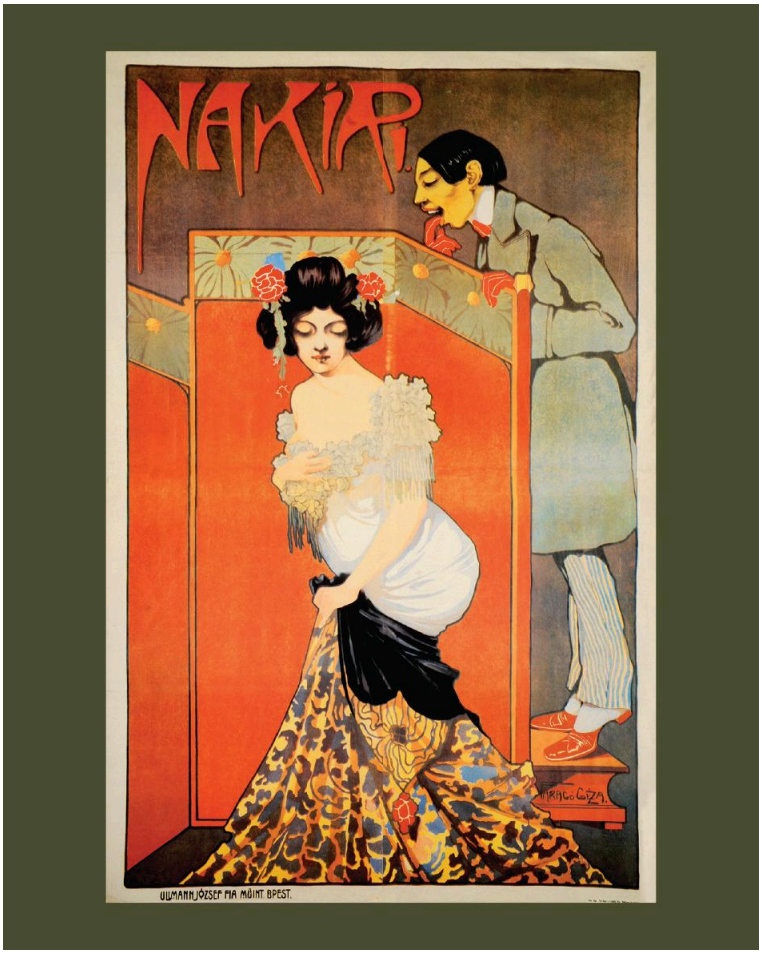
works for her, including *The Japanese Doll, The Little Japanese Girl, The Japanese Ophelia, The Political Spy*, and *A Japanese Tea House*, all featuring Hanako's dramatic death scenes that delighted audiences. These plays were simple, each concluding with the tragic death of Hanako's character. Before the performances, newspapers published detailed descriptions, often recounting the conversations between the lovers as they would be heard in Japanese on stage. In these Japanese-language plays, exaggerated gestures and facial expressions were used prominently to aid audience understanding. Very little is known about the performances of the three actors alongside Hanako, as only a few press articles even mentioned their presence. Hanako's first Budapest performance in 1908 lasted ten nights at the *Fővárosi Orfeum*, where she appeared in the play *Otake*. Although critics found the plot simple and silly, audiences embraced it as Japanese drama and found it engaging and meaningful, despite the absence of traditional Japanese theatrical effects.[1080] The performance's appeal lay largely in Hanako's character, with newspapers emphasizing her lively "chirping" speech and playful movements. Critics compared her to birds, squirrels, and even a "funny little monkey", portraying her as a charming, energetic, and endearing presence on stage. The animalistic descriptions highlighted Hanako's exotic and unfamiliar qualities compared to European performers, but they also carried a tone of condescension toward her and the troupe.[1081] Between October 1910 and May 1911, Hanako toured 21 cities across major cultural centers in the Hungarian Kingdom, and in October 1913, Hanako returned to Budapest for five performances at the *Budapesti Színház (Budapest Theater)*, presenting *Harakiri*, *In the Teahouse*, and *Otake*.[1082] The three plays showcased different stories and deaths, allowing Hanako to demonstrate her dramatic range – from quiet, serene deaths to wild, agonized struggles – highlighting her skill and artistry. In 1911, most Hungarian newspapers focused exclusively on Hanako, praising her acting. There were also disparaging comments about her appearance and physique: in some instances, she was described as a "little frog" or a "tiny yellow person", while in others she received seemingly flattering epithets such as "tiny", "little

[1080] A Hét, 1908. május 3.
[1081] Pesti Napló, 1908. május 5.
[1082] The plots of these plays were as follows: *Otake*: a maid named Otake is killed because of a romantic misunderstanding; *Teahouse*: a scheming geisha commits murder but ultimately becomes a victim herself; *Harakiri*: a maid takes her own life after breaking a valuable plate, driven by shame and honor.

artist", or "tiny woman". One article even stated that Hanako could not be "*counted among the representatives of human beauty*".[1083] Hanako's artistry was not universally praised: a Hungarian critic harshly attacked her, dismissing her work as inferior and animalistic, likening her to a circus "dwarf" and suggesting that she and her troupe exemplified a supposed closeness of the Japanese to monkeys.[1084] During her 1911 and 1913 tours, a debate was sparked by journalist Árpád Pásztor, who questioned the authenticity of Hanako and her company. He claimed that she was not known in Japan and that her plays were not genuine Japanese dramas but productions tailored for European audiences. This led some theaters and newspapers to question the actors' Japanese identity.[1085]

Several other theatrical plays emerged following the advent of commercial Japan-fever in Hungary. The first play set in Japan, *Koziki*, premiered on April 27, 1877, at the *Népszínház (People's Theater)* in Budapest. The music was composed by Alexandre Charles Lecocq, and the libretto was written by William Busnach and Armand Liorat and adapted by Jenő Rákosi. The performance did not rely on theatrical artistry alone: contemporary reports describe a circus-style knife-throwing act that must have kept audiences firmly in their seats. According to the story, Koziki runs away with a street juggler, providing the writers with an opportunity to incorporate various acrobatic elements into the production. The scene, described as a "Japanese specialty", was presumably inspired by traveling Japanese acrobatic troupes.[1086] 1878 saw the first performance in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy of the French comedy *Return from Japan (Le Retour du Japon, 1875)* by M. Alfred Delacour and Alfred Ermy, staged at the National Theatre in Budapest. Hungarian works were primarily written during the Russo-Japanese War, which attracted the most attention from Hungarian audiences, though foreign plays had already been performed in several locations beforehand.

[1083] Tiszántúl [Nagyvárad], 1911. március 7.
[1084] Pesti Hírlap, 1913. október 14.
[1085] Az Ujság, 1913. október 7., Székely Ellenzék, 1911. április 2; „ Heti Szemle (Szatmárnémeti), 1911. április 5.
[1086] Vasárnapi Ujság, 1877. április 29



Géza Faragó's “Nakiri” Operetta Poster (Országos Széchényi Könyvtár)

The following foreign plays with Japanese themes were performed in Hungarian on Hungarian stages: the operetta *The Mikado*[1087] in 1886 at the *Népszínház* in Budapest and in 1887 in Arad (now: Romania)[1088], the operetta *The Geisha, a Story of a Tea House*[1089] in 1897 at the *Magyar Színház*, the drama *Madame Butterfly*[1090] in 1901 at the *Vígszínház* in Budapest and in 1902 in Arad (now: Romania), and the opera *Pillangókisasszony (Madama Butterfly)*[1091] in 1906 at the *Magyar Királyi Operaház*. In

[1087] W. S. Gilbert, A. Sullivan
[1088] Critics in Arad were not impressed by the heavily advertised play; in their view, forcing the actors to stamp their feet and bow “in the Japanese style” was “ridiculous”. The performance did not satisfy the audience, although they found the music to be good. See: Piroska Katalin, Piroska István: *Az aradi magyar színjátszás 130 éve. I. kötet (1818–1905)*. Irodalmi Jelen Könyvek, 2012., p. 170.
[1089] S. Jones. For domestic printed librettos and press reports, see: Bozó Péter: *Operett Magyarországon, 1860-1958*. Forráskatalógus. https://www.zti.hu/mza/m0402.htm (accessed: 2025 Nov.)
[1090] D. Belasco
[1091] G. Puccini. Puccini attended the Hungarian premiere and closely supervised the production. Like other major operas of the time, performances had to follow the official publisher Giulio Ricordi’s guidelines, using authorized

1902, the National Theatre in Kolozsvár (now: Cluj-Napoca, Romania) staged a self-produced “Japanese fan dance” which is evident from the theatre's 19 March 1902 poster now in the *Theatre History Collection*. In 1905, in the *Fővárosi Orfeum* in Budapest, the German operetta *Nakiri* (*Nakiris Hochzeit oder: Der Stern von Siam / Nakiri’s Wedding, or The Star of Siam*, written by Paul Lincke, 1902) was performed, and it was occasionally staged in other parts of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. 1906 featured the Budapest premiere of the American operetta *ShoGun* (written by Gustav Luders, 1904) at the *Király Theatre*. In 1907, *The Merchant of Smiles* (*La marchande de sourires*, written by Judith Gautier, 1888) was performed in Arad. The operetta *Gésák (The Geisha)* was staged as the opening piece at the *Magyar Színház*, and its success is demonstrated by its subsequent performances in Nyitra (now: Nitra, Slovakia; 1899), Kolozsvár (now: Cluj-Napoca, Romania; 1899), Nagyvárad (now: Oradea, Romania; 1901), and the *Király Színház* in Budapest (1912). These light-hearted, sentimental plays presented an idealized vision of Japan, often filtered through stylized portrayals of women. More broadly, Western theatre’s representations of Asia – especially China and Japan – were shaped by a longstanding tradition of “half-reality”, blending fact with fiction. Influential Western figures such as Townsend Harris, Thomas Blake Glover, Lafcadio Hearn, and Pierre Loti helped construct romanticized and stereotyped images, including the figure of the “Japanese doll” or “mousmé” (from musume, meaning “girl”) and corresponding male types. In comic opera, “the East” was thus imagined as a fanciful fairy-tale realm populated by charming, eccentric characters with little connection to lived reality.

The popularity of these performances is reflected in the impact they had on other theatrical or literary works. The operetta *The Mikado* inspired the Circus of Ernst Renz, which staged a show titled *Japán, avagy a Mikádó furfangos asszonyai (Japan, or The Cunning Ladies of the Mikado)* in Berlin, Hamburg, Vienna, and eventually Budapest.

set and costume designs, libretto, score, and mise-en-scène as part of the performance rights. Elza Szamosi, the Hungarian actress, was the star of Puccini's opera not only in Hungary but also in America. Her reception history was strongly shaped by her beauty, charm, and talent. Her personal life – married three times – fueled rumors of an affair with Puccini during his visit to Budapest, though evidence suggests their relationship was likely limited to a brief flirtation during rehearsals for the Hungarian premieres of Madama Butterfly. Anecdotes, such as Puccini giving her a private card-shuffling lesson, and staged photographs of Szamosi with the composer, were widely circulated in the press, enhancing her image and promoting her as the ideal Butterfly. Szamosi also performed on the 1906–1907 American tour, receiving high praise from both English- and Hungarian-language press. See: Szabó Ferenc János: *Szamosi Elza (1881-1924) művészete*. Phd Liszt Ferenc Zeneművészeti Egyetem. 2018. pp. 42-57.

The Mikado was also adapted into a one-act parody: Otto Ewald wrote *Der Mizekado, oder Ein Tag in Pititu (The Vice-Mikado, or A Day in Pititu)* in a mixture of English and German, with music by Franz Beier. It was performed at the *German Theater* in Budapest on December 2, 1888. The first Pest operetta set in East Asia was created in 1888 as an imitation of *The Mikado*: Jenő Sztojanovits, a church musician, and the journalist Miksa Rothauser (György Ruttkay) wrote *Peking rózsája (The Rose of Peking)*, which was at the same time a parodic adaptation of Carlo Gozzi's tragicomic play *Turandot*. The popularity of the operetta *Gésák (The Geisha)* can be gauged by the fact that it inspired a parody as well: *Gézák, vagy: egy tabáni kávéház története (The Gézas, or: The Story of a Café in Tabán)*[1092] by Antal Oroszi. Another example of this inspiration appeared in 1899, when the entertainment venue *Ősbudavára* in Budapest opened with a parodic dance operetta and revue entitled *A gésa gimnázium (The Geisha High School)*, written by the trio of authors Jenő Heltai, Jenő Sztojanovits, and Emil Makai. A later inspiration includes *Három kicsi nő (Three Little Women)*, a 'Japanese operetta' that premiered at the Royal Orfeum in Budapest in 1909.[1093] The *Gésák (The Geisha)* also appears in *Pacsirta (Skylark)*, a 1923 novel by Dezső Kosztolányi, one of Hungary's most influential writers.

[1092] It was a Hungarian parody that replaced Japanese geishas with the regulars of the fictional Café Mikado, where both the owner and waiter were named Géza – a play on words linking the Hungarian name to the Japanese term for female beauties. By shifting the setting from a Japanese tea house to a local café, the piece domesticized Japan, but its real focus was the multicultural social life of Buda's Tabán district, where Hungarian gentries, Jews, Serb merchants, and German entrepreneurs mingled in cafés.
[1093] Népszava, 1909-02-21.

Postcards with Hungarian actresses (Ilka Pálmay, Irén Székely, Sári Petráss, Csáky) from A Mikádó (Zempléni Múzeum)

Among the most successful of these productions was *Pollacsekék Japánban (The Pollacseks in Japan)*, a summer farce by Mátyás Feld and Lajos Donáth. Promoted as a box-office success that satirized political and current events in an entertaining manner, it premiered on July 7, 1905, at the *Vígszínpad* Theater in Óbuda. It is reported that the play was performed fifty times. The main protagonist is Jakab Pollacsek, president of the delegation of ceremonial sword-bearers from the Jewish community of Külteke, who travels to Japan to present a gift of ceremonial swords intended for Field Marshal Iwao Ōyama. The play's musical score was compiled from works by twenty-two renowned composers. The audience received the play enthusiastically: the theater was consistently full, tickets for both afternoon and evening performances sold out in advance, and the production remained in the repertoire until the end of the season. Contemporary newspapers mention several memorable scenes from the play, including the "*Jónás, the Warrior in Japan*" scene, featuring a medley of national dances, an imitation of an African American dance, and Izsó Gyöngyi's splendid couplets with the refrain "*Aha-Naja-Ohó-E'so*" *("Uh-huh-Well-yeah-Oh-ho-So-there")*, as well as the humorous song of the "*seven Japanese interim ministers*".[1094] The plot of *The Pollacseks in Japan* is an ironic reflection on a real plan that once existed: a large

[1094] Magyarország, 1905-07-09.; 1905-07-01.; 1905-07-04.; 1905-07-11.; 1905-07-20.; 1905-07-23.; 1905-07-27. Független Magyarország, 1905-07-08. Pesti Hírlap, 1905-08-13.

delegation, led by Károly Eötvös, a member of the National Assembly, considered traveling to Japan to present a sword to Ōyama.[1095] The actual story (whose reliability is questionable) can be assembled from mosaic-like reports of the plan in the Hungarian press, often presented in a half-serious way. In June 1905, a newspaper article about the 'Hungarian Delegation to Japan' reports[1096] that at the latest meeting of the delegation committee, they decided to prepare a trip to Japan, and the committee selected from among the samples of swords and albums that had been presented. Chairman Károly Eötvös had already written the inscriptions in Hungarian; Dr. Kenzaburō Andō, a Japanese legal scholar, would translate them into Japanese. Allegedly, preparations were also underway on the Japanese side to receive the delegation, organized by a certain Dr. "*Macukozi Macumura*", a Japanese professor. By early July, the delegation had requested the intercession of Makino, the Japanese minister in Vienna, to support the project. Makino, having received the delegation's letter dated 23 May and after a member paid a visit to him, replied to their request in a letter written in French to Károly Eötvös, asking that the delegation send him as soon as possible a list of the names and occupations of the gentlemen participating in the Japanese mission, as well as the exact dates of departure and arrival in Japan, and the route they had chosen.[1097] According to reports, the Hungarian delegation carrying the ceremonial sword, led by Károly Eötvös, was about to set out for Japan on July 28. Allegedly, arrangements were made in Nagasaki, Kobe, Yokohama, and Tokyo by the Japanese Kihin Kai (Welcome Society) to organize receptions. Eventually, the delegation did not go to Japan. The emergence of the project in the press and its absurdity prompted not only a play but also a long humorous poem, "*In Praise of the Journey of the Hungarian Sword Bearers to Japan*" in which the delegates realize how long the journey would take and immediately abandon their plan on the shores of the Adriatic Sea at Fiume.

[1095] Nagyvárad, 1905. Július 6.
[1096] Alkotmány, 1905-06-28
[1097] Pesti Hírlap, 1905-07-05

Dicsőítő versezet a Díszkardhordó magyarok japáni útjáról (részlet)[1098]

S szólt Schlézinger bácsi: - Mondd, csak, édes vajda,
Hol van az a Japán s népe milyen fajta?
Alva is hallgatom szavad sóvárogva,
Szomjas az én lelkem a tudományokra.

Szippantott a vajd az vergóniából.
Ott van Japánország, valahol Dunántúl:
Szentgyörgynek innen van, Veszprémnek túlnan van,
Sokszor voltam ottan fiskusi voltomban.

Örökké tart ott a virág fakadása,
Ott az embereknek ferde a nyílása,
Ott a házasságok két hétre köttetnek,
Ugye Zichy pajtás, jó vón ez itt kendnek?

Amúgy szegről-végről rokonok is vélünk,
És ha el is sárgult, mégis a mi vérünk
És meg nem tagadja hős vérünket ő se,
Miutánunk ő a föld leghősebb hőse.

Kuroki és Togó, Nogi és Ojáma,
Érdemesek ők a dícséret szavára.
Dícséret szavára, Tiller díszkardjára,
Föl magyar legények, menjünk el Japánba!

Zatyakolt a gőzös, mintha a must érik,
És meg sem is állott egész Fiuméig.
Ott csak megáll bemban, tovább menni nem mer,
Útját szegi ott az Ádriai tenger.

Ádriai tenger az Balaton bátyja,
Ezt még a vajda is szomorúan látja,
Szomorúan látja, csüggedten áll itten:
- Tényleg nagyobb annál, no ezt sose hittem!

Olay Lajos mondá: - Hogyha nem jön bóra,
Fölszállunk majd reggel szépen a hajóra.
És szentül ígérem s szavam meg is tartom,
Ott lesz Japánország, a túlnansó parton!

S felelte a vajda a hullámot nézve:
Én pedig, jó öcsém, nem megyek a vízre!
Tengeri nyavaját nem állja a testem,
Mióta Csobáncon egyszer beléestem!

Víz nem való nékünk, mindig csak bajt, kárt hoz.
Inkább hű maradok a régi szokáshoz,
Mitől vissza nem tart jégeső se bóra:
Mék Abbáziába egy-két pikkolóra.

Poem In Praise of the Journey of the Hungarian Sword Bearers to Japan – (Excerpt)[1099]

Old Uncle Schlézinger spoke: “Tell me, dear Voivode,
Where is Japan, and what kind of folk does it hold?
Even in sleep I listen, longing for your word,
My soul is thirsty, eager for the learned world.”

The Voivode took a puff from his Virginia,
“Japan lies yonder, somewhere in Transdanubia.
From Szentgyörgy it is here, beyond Veszprém it lies,
I’ve often been there in my attorney days.”

There, flowering lasts forever, never to decay,
And people’s eyes are slanted in a curious way.
Where marriages last only a fortnight’s span –
Wouldn’t you want that here as well, my good fellow Zichy man?

And after all, they’re kin to us in some degree,
Though yellowed by time, still blood of ours they’ll be.
They too would never deny our heroic blood,
For after us they are the world’s most heroic bud.

Kuroki and Togo, Nogi and Oyama,
Worthy of words of praise and karma.
Of praise and honor, and Tiller’s ceremonial blade—
Up, Hungarian lads, let’s go to Japan, on a grand parade!

The steam engine kept chugging, just like frizzling must,
It never slowed down until it reached Fiume’s rust.
There it halted – no further dared to pass,
The Adriatic barred its way at last.

The Adriatic Sea is Lake Balaton’s elder brother,
Even the Voivode sees it so, in sorrow like no other.
He stands there shaken, filled with quiet doubt:
“Truly larger – I would never have thought that!”

Lajos Olay said: “If the bora winds won’t blow,
In the morning we’ll board the ship and go.
I swear it true, and I say what I say:
Japan will be waiting just across the way!

The Voivode, watching the breaking wave, replied:
“My dear young lad, I will not go to the tide!
My body cannot bear such seas and foam,
Ever since at Csobánc I once fell headlong!

Water is not for us – it only brings us strife,
I’d rather hold on to old and settled life.
No hail nor bora shall keep me from my cheer:
I’m off to Abbazia for a pint of beer.”

[1098] A Hét, 1905-05-28
[1099] Translated by the Author.

Regarding serious genres, Hungary is considered to be the first Central European theatrical staging of Nō: an amateur production in which students from the Civic School for Girls in Nagykároly (now: Carei, Romania) performed *Hagoromo (The Feather Mantle)*, based on Benedek Balogh Baráthosi's 1905 translation and adapted by Ferenc Király.

Following the line of theatrical works of Hungarian origin, in Arad (now in Romania) particular interest centered on the historical play *A cár és a Mikádó (The Tsar and the Mikado)*, written by the local attorney Károly Radó, which premiered on June 17, 1904 and addressed the topical issue of the ongoing Russo-Japanese War.[1100] In the spring of 1905, a "living picture" entitled *A cseresznyevirágzás ünnepe Japánban (The Cherry Blossom Festival in Japan)* was presented at a concert in the theatre in Szabadka (now: Subotica, Serbia).[1101] In 1908 the Hungarian-born composer Béla Laszky, active in Vienna and Innsbruck, wrote a Japanese-themed operetta titled *Drei Kleine Model (Három a kislány / Three Little Maids)*. In 1908, the Opera House presented Iván Hüvös's Japanese-themed ballet entitled *Csodaváza (The Magic Vase)*. (By October 1910, the ballet had been performed twenty-five times, an exceptional achievement in under two years. After being staged at La Scala in Milan, *The Magic Vase* was renamed Siama for its 1913 Italian premiere, and Hungarian newspapers reported that its setting was either India or Siam.) In 1910 Imre Farkas's new operetta *Narancsvirág (Orange Blossom)* premiered; it was well received at the Király Theatre in Budapest and subsequently in several other Hungarian cities including Kolozsvár (now Cluj-Napoca, Romania), Szabadka (now: Subotica, Serbia), Szeged, Győr, and Losonc (now: Lučenec, Slovakia).

In 1909, a Japanese-themed play titled *Taifun (Typhoon)* by Menyhért Lengyel – one of Hungary's most frequently staged authors – became a resounding, world-renowned success. According to legend, the idea for the play came to him while he was living in Berlin. Each day, he saw groups of Japanese people coming and going

[1100] Piroska Katalin, Piroska István: *Az aradi magyar színjátszás 130 éve. I. kötet (1818–1905)*. Irodalmi Jelen Könyvek, 2012., p. 312.
[1101] Bácsország II /15. 1905. április 9., 13.

through the gates of the Japanese embassy opposite his apartment, inspiring him to write Taifun, set among the Japanese community in Berlin. Its protagonist, Dr. Tokeramo, is a Japanese man on a secret mission who becomes entangled in a passionate love affair.[1102] Lengyel first attempted to stage Taifun in Berlin, but it was rejected on the grounds that the Japanese were "*not considered dramatic characters, but rather operetta figures*". However, the Vígszínház theater in Budapest seized the opportunity and staged the play in 1909. Its premiere – featuring actors in kimonos and Japanese-style set elements – became a major cultural event. Encouraged by the Budapest production's success, the director of the Berliner Theater quickly reversed his decision and added Typhoon to the program in 1910. The Berlin performance was soon followed by premieres in European capitals, bringing Lengyel fame both at home and abroad. By 1924, the play had already reached its 150th performance in Budapest. Taifun achieved undeniable worldwide success, with top actors portraying Doctor Tokeramo. (The only fiasco was the play's premiere in Copenhagen, where audiences were displeased by the actors' Western clothing and the absence of Japanese props, which spoiled their imagined romantic Japan. It was, however, successful in Berlin, Vienna, London, and Paris, indicating that the romanticized image of Japan had lost appeal in much of Europe.) Taifun's creation was driven by three factors: public affairs, romantic longing, and geopolitical opportunity. The plot reflected contemporary interest in Emperor Wilhelm's "yellow peril" declaration, while the author's personal heartbreak over a Hungarian lady provided emotional fuel. A coincidental view of the Japanese embassy inspired the story, transforming real-life observations into a drama in which Doctor Tokeramo, representing the "yellow peril", kills his love, the white demon. The play blends political tension, personal desire, and fantasy, suggesting that it may have also served as a reflection of the author's own romantic frustrations. One might wonder: if Doctor Tokeramo is so much like Menyhért Lengyel, how much do the Japanese working at the Berlin embassy resemble the Hungarian colony in Berlin? Playing with this idea, we can see the 'exoticism' of Taifun as a reflection of Hungarian intellectual

[1102] „*»And who knows how long this topic has been lying unnoticed on the streets of Berlin!« the author often said, and we have to believe him, »Lo and behold, it was a Hungarian who finally had to go for it!«*" *Lengyel Menyhért: Taifun*, I. F. Kaffka Margit. Nyugat, 1909. 22. sz.

emigration.[1103] If we take a look at contemporary critiques, there is one by a Japanese person who was living in Berlin at the time:

> *"Typhoon is currently running at the Berlin Opera House. The author is Hungarian, and it's said to be based on the experiences of Japanese students studying abroad. It's apparently very popular. The Japanese protagonist is apparently named Dr. Takeramo Nitobe. Just hearing the name Takeramo alone makes me lose all desire to go see it. People say it quite accurately captures Japanese characteristics, even expressing Japanese virtues, but I'm still afraid of Takeramo and haven't seen it yet."*[1104]

Menyhért Lengyel: Taifun. *Vígszínház (Comedy Theater),* 1909, Gyula Hegyes as Tokeramo[1105]

In 1909, another long-running Japanese-themed theatrical piece premiered: *Az aranyhalász – japán mesejáték három felvonásban, dalokkal és tánccal (The Goldfish Fisherman – a Japanese fairy tale in three acts, with songs and dances)*, written by Árpád Zemplényi and Benedek Balogh Barátosi.

Regarding Hungarian motion pictures with Japanese themes, in the spring of **1901**, the first of its kind, *The Dance (A Táncz)*, was created and performed at the *Uránia Hungarian Scientific Theater (Uránia Magyar Tudományos Színház)* as an illustration for a popular cultural-history lecture of the period. The twenty-four dance scenes, each lasting one to two minutes, showcased a wide range of styles – from ancient Greek to csárdás and Japanese dances – and were performed by renowned

[1103] Lengyel Menyhért: *Taifun*. Magvető, 1984. pp. 21-23.
[1104] 寺田寅彦, 東京朝日新聞, 明治四十三年四月
[1105] Unknown Photographer: Gyula Hegedűs as Dr. Tokeramo Nitobe in Taifun by Menyhért Lengyel. Vígszínház, Budapest, 1909. Budapest, OSZMI. Inv. no. B67.1/2. Photograph. 1909.

Hungarian actors of the period. The film became one of Uránia's most successful productions, reaching its 125th performance by 1910. Unfortunately, as far as we know, none of the recordings have survived. The memory of the first Hungarian motion picture endures only through the printed text of the performance, still photographs taken during filming, a few surviving frames, and contemporary press accounts and recollections.[1106]

Sári Fedák performs the "*dances of the French of the Far East*", the dance of the Japanese women in *A Táncz*

In June **1904**, a motion picture company arrived in Nagyvárad (now: Oradea in Romania) and advertised screenings in a tent on the main square, featuring footage of the Russo-Japanese War. Later that summer, another company, Narten's Bioskop, appeared with more extensive advertising, regularly updating its program and showing new war footage daily. The screenings consisted of filmed scenes of battlefields, troops, marches, and river crossings. There was even a third small private company, led by the cinematographer Ignác Mück, who presented a new motion picture show in June 1904 in Nagyvárad, featuring scenes from the Russo-Japanese War filmed in Manchuria by George Rogers (an American cameraman working for a London-based film company). Advertised as authentic battlefield footage, the screenings were held multiple times a day – three daily, and five during the summer – beginning at 8 p.m. Ticket prices ranged from 40 fillér for standing room to 1 krone 80 fillér for regular admission. In the early 1900s, Hungarian film director and cinema entrepreneur Sándor Lifka established

[1106] Buglya Zsófia: *Az ismeretlen Uránia - Fejezetek egy filmszínház történetéből*. Méry Ratio, Budapest, 2021., p. 155., 163.

cinemas in Kassa (now Košice, Slovakia), Szeged, and Szabadka (now Subotica, Serbia). According to a **1905** advertisement, Lifka's "perfected electro-bioscope" could be seen in Szabadka in September, presenting "the most sensational events" in a large hall built for this purpose, "illuminated by a 20-horsepower steam dynamo". The program included motion pictures from Japan with titles such as *Japanese Imperial Guard Drill*, *The Russo-Japanese War*, *Main Street in Tokyo*, *Pilgrimage to Nikko*, and *The Temple of the God of War*.[1107] One year later, in **1906**, a motion picture program in Nagyvárad featured four films on various Japanese themes.[1108] In August **1908**, a "*sensational, captivating moving-picture show*" was held in the garden of the Kossuth Café in Szeged, where one of the highlights of the program was "*Scenes from Japan*".[1109] On May 5, **1913**, Shūho Chiba (千葉秀浦 ?–?), an editor from Tokyo, gave a lecture at the Uránia on "*the Japanese spirit, theaters, and performing arts*". Chikamatsu's drama The *Woman's Dancing Cloak* was presented as a moving picture, and the text of the drama was distributed in Hungarian to the audience. The performance was followed by a discussion, during which the audience asked questions about the drama and its characters. The Hungarian premiere of *films made in Japan* took place in January 1913. At that time, two Japanese dramas, a Japanese comedy, and another Japanese film featuring Japanese actors, all distributed by Pathé, were screened at the Uránia Hungarian Scientific Theater in Szeged.[1110]

Hungary as It Appeared in Japanese Literature

There are few literary works about Hungary from the Japanese side. Among the earliest, we find mainly poems: a number of them were written by poets Sakura Maruyama, Nichinan Fukumoto, and Yoshikata Ikebe during their visits to Budapest.[1111] Sakura Maruyama and Nichinan Fukumoto are said to have met Hungarian women

[1107] Bácsmegyei Napló, 1905. szeptember 30.
[1108] Kupán Árpád: *A mozi évszázada Nagyváradon*. Partiumi és Bánsági Műemlékvédő- és Emlékhely Társaság. Nagyvárad, 2007. pp. 23-27.
[1109] Szeged és Vidéke, 1908-08-01
[1110] Délmagyarország, 1913. január 3. p. 8.; Titles of the plays presented: *A Daimió bűne* (*The Crime of Daimyo* - Japanese drama, performed by members of the Imperial Theater in Tokyo); *A Gésa vőlegénye* (*The Geisha's Fiancé* - drama); *Ketten egy kimonóban* (*Two in One Kimono* - comedy); *A japán festő* (*The Japanese Painter* - Japanese trick)
[1111] Yoshikata Ikebe's poem can be found in Chapter Four

during their stays in the city (Maruyama in 1887 and Fukumoto in 1898), as can be inferred from their poems.

Sakura Maruyama	Nichinan Fukumoto[1112]
をり得たるいばらの花のなごりとや 色なつかしきそでの香ぞする Remnant of a wild rose I plucked; the color and scent of your sleeve still linger with me.	千歳ののち王昭君のおもかげを 斯拉鳥の君が上に見るかな As if after a thousand years, I lift my eyes to your Slavic gaze – and there, I see Wang Zhaojun's[1113] beauty.
くさまくら しばし結べるつゆのまの 夢はあだなるものにぞありける On a pillow of grass, for a moment, like morning dew, my dream vanished in vain.	君とならば 駱駝が上に鞍並めて 沙華拉（サハラ）行くとも我は厭はじ Together, atop a row of camel saddles, I'd gladly brave the Sahara's battles, With you, only the journey matters.
	率ていなば家に妻あり止まらば 我が事やまむあはれうつせみ Should I bring you along, when my wife awaits at home? Ah, my fleeting, fragile life.

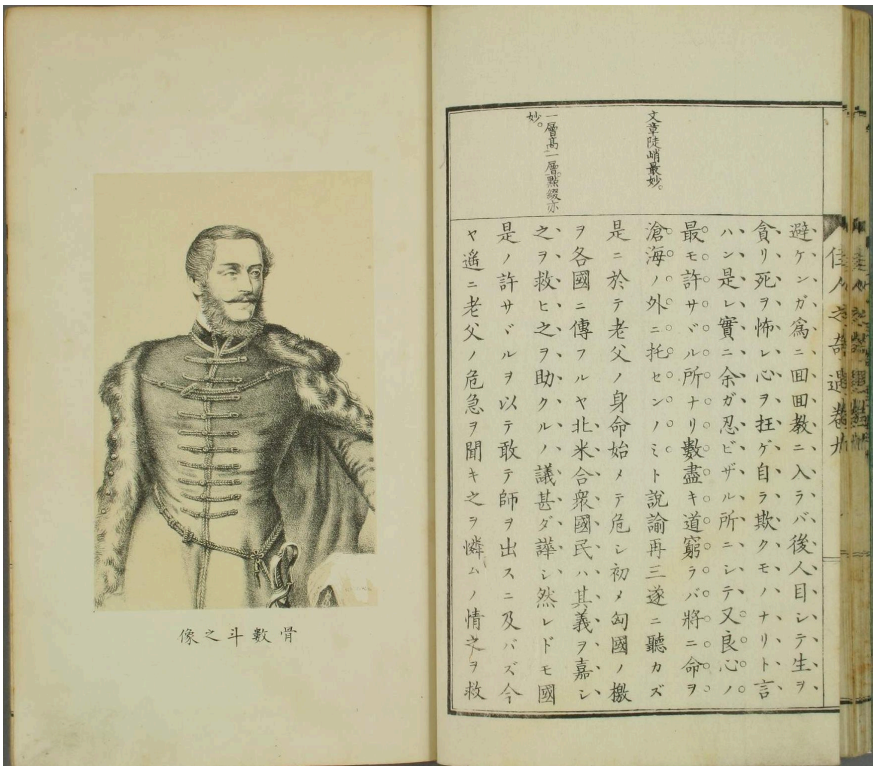
One of the most outstanding works of prose featuring Hungary before 1900 is a serialized political novel written by Sanshi Tōkai, whose real name was Shirō Shiba, a Japanese writer and politician. The novel was published between 1885 and 1891 under the title *Strange Encounters with Beautiful Women* (佳人之奇遇).[1114] Four people of different nationalities, burning with patriotism, meet each other: the defeated former samurai Sanshi Tōkai; an elderly Chinese man; a stunningly beautiful young Spanish woman, the daughter of a commander who fell in the Spanish Revolution; and a beautiful woman of Irish descent, the daughter of a fighter in the Irish War of Independence. Through Sanshi Tōkai's encounters and conversations with them, the

[1112] 磐乃屋歌集
[1113] one of the Four Beauties of ancient China
[1114] 東海散士『佳人之奇遇』, 1885-1891

story depicts the tragedy of smaller nations fighting for their independence in the age of nation states. The main locations include Spain, Ireland, Poland, Hungary, and Greece, but the story also touches on Turkey, India, Vietnam, Burma (Myanmar), Korea, Mexico, Egypt, Liberia, Sudan, and Madagascar. This rather conservative work, steeped in Confucian Chinese ideas and rich in rhetorical elements rather than descriptive passages, was written during the era of nationalism and imperialism, and thus discusses the turbulent history of individual nations at that time: uprisings, arrests, court trials; all presented through the encounters of the four main characters.[1115] The work was written for educational purposes and features important historical events such as the American Revolution, the political crisis in Ireland, and Japan's interests in Korea. The women who appear in the novel have no particular role, except to serve as a foil for the various themes. Sanshi Tōkai sought to outline the threats that caused serious concern for Japan in light of the independence wars, national aspirations, and patriotic sentiments of individual countries in the wake of the ambitions of the great powers. The work raised the question of Japan's response to modernization, highlighting the growing doubts within Japanese society. The series of booklets published between 1885 and 1887 was a huge success in Japan, becoming one of the bestsellers of its time. Reading circles were established nationwide, where many eager listeners could hear the novel read aloud. In Tōkai's novel, we encounter Lajos Kossuth, one of the central figures of the Hungarian struggle for independence, in the section titled *Encounters with Unfortunate Patriots*.[1116] Kossuth is introduced as a man whose name "*is known throughout Europe and America*", and who has earned widespread respect through his fierce combativeness, economic talent, and rare nobility of spirit.[1117] In *Strange Encounters with Beautiful Women,* Hungary is mentioned in Volumes 2, 3, 4,, 7, 8, 9, 13 and 14. Before the First Sino-Japanese War, the focus is primarily on Volume 2, where the wandering scholar meets Madam Kossuth (Lajos Kossuth's daughter) aboard a ship between America and Spain and continues to encounter her in America. Through these meetings, he hears stories about her father and Hungary, prompting reflections on Hungarian history. The narrative even traces Hungarians – mistakenly – as

[1115] 藤田みどり『病疴とアフリカと東海散士』
[1116] 東海散士『佳人之奇遇』, 1885-1891. Vol. 8., 9., 13., 14.
[1117] 東海散士『佳人之奇遇』, 1887. Vol. 8.

descendants of Attila the Hun. Austria under Metternich is depicted harshly: centralized, oppressive, and corrupt, suppressing the people's autonomy and vitality, while noble and clerical rule dominates and bribery flourishes. Madam Kossuth's storytelling conveys respect for Hungarian freedom and the popular spirit. Tōkai portrays Kossuth's work, the Hungarian revolution, and the struggle for independence as "*superhuman, miraculous deeds*". In the novel, the Hungarian people appear as a weak and small nation and an oppressed people, which leads Tōkai to admire Kossuth's efforts and feel moved by the tragedy of the Hungarian patriots. This depiction mirrors contemporary Japanese anxieties: as Western colonial ambitions increasingly targeted Asia, Japan feared that it, too, might become a victim of colonization. This underlying tension explains why Tōkai expresses solidarity with the small Hungarian-inhabited region within the Habsburg Monarchy.[1118]


骨數斗之像

Kossuth's portrait in Sanshi Tōkai's work

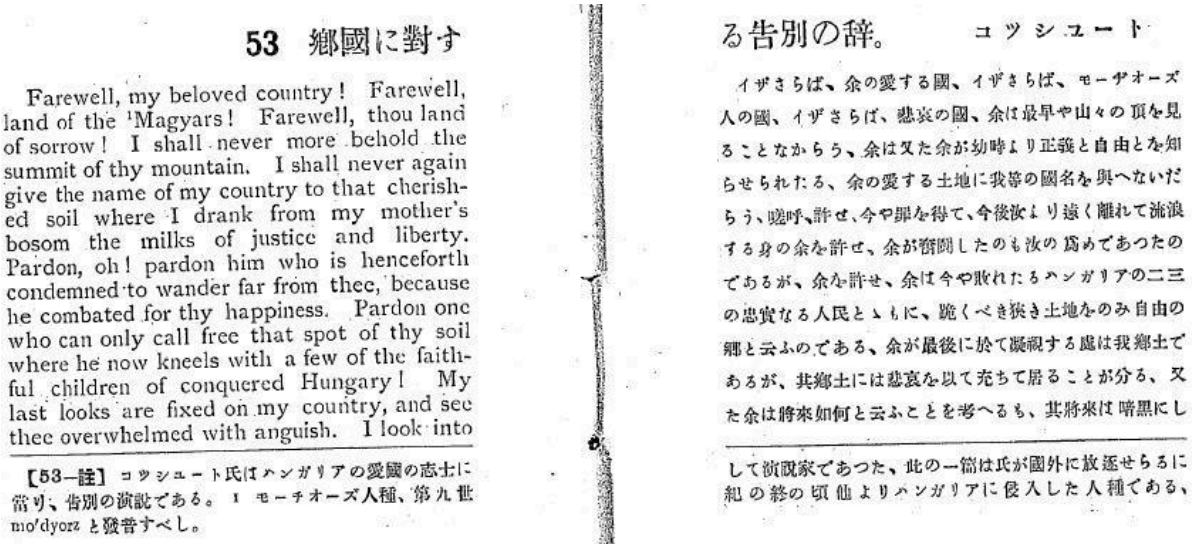
[1118] Kondó Maszanori: *Magyarország képe az első világháború előtti Japánban* In: Tanulmányok a magyar-japán kapcsolatok történetéből. ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2009., p. 105.

Sanshi Tōkai's novel was read by Katsumi Kuroita, a scholar of Japanese literature, who was so captivated by the chapter on the Hungarians and Kossuth that, when he visited Budapest in 1909, he decided to visit Kossuth's grave in the *Kerepesi Cemetery*. He later wrote:

> "*Not far from the Eastern Railway Station is the Kerepesi Cemetery. This is where Kossuth and many other Hungarian patriots are laid to rest. I intended to pay my respects, but I lost my way in the falling snow and, to my great regret, was unable to carry out my plan. When I left the yellow city*[1119] *the next day and arrived in Vienna, I was suddenly surrounded by silence, as if the whole city were asleep. In that silence, I tried to imagine where Hungary would be in thirty or fifty years…*"[1120]

Kossuth was perhaps the most famous Hungarian in Japan. This is evident not only from his presence in literary works but from his appearance in several official publications of the Meiji period. The library of the Japanese Diet preserves multiple such volumes. In the ninth chapter of *History of the Nineteenth Century: The Age of Revolutions*,[1121] published in 1903, he is described as a man "*guilty in the eyes of the Austrians*" in connection with the suppression of the Hungarian War of Independence. Later, in *Portraits of One Hundred Great Men*,[1122] published in 1910, he is portrayed as a "*Hungarian patriot who became a victim of the Hungarian nation and lived in a desperate struggle*". His farewell speech in English was also translated into Japanese in 1911.[1123]

[1119] Budapest
[1120] 黒板勝美『西遊二年欧米文明記』文会堂書店, 1911, pp. 447-448. Translated by the author
[1121] 野々村戒三『十九世紀史革命時代』東京, 民友社, 1903., pp. 247-254.
[1122] 高須芳次郎『百傑スケッチ』東京, 博文館, 1910, pp. 68-70.
[1123] 前田定之介『英語演説法』東京, 成功雑誌社, 1911, pp. 122-125.



53 鄉國に對す

Farewell, my beloved country! Farewell, land of the Magyars! Farewell, thou land of sorrow! I shall never more behold the summit of thy mountain. I shall never again give the name of my country to that cherished soil where I drank from my mother's bosom the milks of justice and liberty. Pardon, oh! pardon him who is henceforth condemned to wander far from thee, because he combated for thy happiness. Pardon one who can only call free that spot of thy soil where he now kneels with a few of the faithful children of conquered Hungary! My last looks are fixed on my country, and see thee overwhelmed with anguish. I look into

【53—註】コッシュート氏はハンガリアの愛國の志士に當り、告別の演說である。1 モーチオーズ人種、第九世 mo'dyorz と發音すべし。

る告別の辭。 コッシュート

イザさらば、余の愛する國、イザさらば、モーザオーズ人の國、イザさらば、悲哀の國、余は最早や山々の頂を見ることなからう、余は又た余が幼時より正義と自由とを知らせられたる、余の愛する土地に我等の國名を與へないだらう、嗚呼、許せ、今や歸を得て、今後汝より遠く離れて流浪する身の余を許せ、余が奮闘したのも汝の爲めであつたのであるが、余を許せ、余は今や敗れたるハンガリアの二三の忠實なる人民とゝもに、跪くべき狹き土地なのみ自由の鄉と云ふのである、余が最後に於て凝視する處は我鄉土であるが、其鄉土には悲哀を以て充ちて居ることが分る、又た余は將來如何と云ふことを考へるも、其將來は暗黑にし

して演說家であつた、此の一篇は氏が國外に放逐せらるに組の終の頃他よりハンガリアに侵入した人種である、

Kossuth's farewell speech in Japanese translation (excerpt)

Kossuth was not the only famous Hungarian to appear in Meiji-era Japanese sources. Another internationally recognized Hungarian figure also emerges from the records. Sándor Csoma Kőrösi (1784–1842) was a Hungarian philologist and orientalist. During extended stays in Tibetan monasteries, particularly in Zanskar, he mastered the Tibetan language and studied Buddhist texts with exceptional rigor. His most important scholarly achievements are the first Tibetan–English Dictionary and the first Tibetan Grammar, published in 1834, which laid the foundations of Western Tibetology. Kőrösi's name appeared in two Meiji-era books.[1124]

There is a Japanese literary work that is particularly noteworthy in the context of Hungarian–Japanese relations. It is a novella written in 1914 by the painter and writer Ikuma Arishima (有島生馬, 1882–1974), in which a young Hungarian boy serves as the central character.[1125] In the story, Arishima receives a letter at the outbreak of World War I from a long-lost friend, Antoine Wambersky, a very handsome boy of Hungarian descent who lives in Felsősegesd, Somogy County. According to the novella, the two had met years earlier in Rome, where they were both studying art. Arishima did indeed study in Italy, and Wambersky was also a real person – a Hungarian sculptor. However, because Arishima's works characteristically blend fiction with reality, the accuracy of the

[1124] 北村直治郎「アレクサンデル、チヨマ、クルシーの経歴及事業」『史学界』4巻2号, 1902, pp.24-31.; 外人ノ眼ニ映ズル仏教 西山栄久著. 仏教図書出版, 明33.6.
[1125] 有島生馬「美少年」,『白樺』, 1914.

story cannot be established with certainty. From the novella, we learn that after meeting Arishima, Wambersky developed a hobby of comparing the Hungarian and Japanese languages and would applaud whenever he managed to find a supposed common etymological link. One of his deepest wishes was to visit Japan and see Japanese art with his own eyes. In the story, the Hungarian gives Arishima a Hungarian-language book titled *Művészeti boncolástan (Art Anatomy)* as a gift and later sends him a postcard featuring one of his own paintings. Wambersky even adopts part of Arishima's name, calling himself Shima-Wambersky. The short story is still regarded as an important work in Japanese literary history.[1126]

One of the less explored dimensions of Hungarian–Japanese relations is the translation of Hungarian works into Japanese. According to contemporary sources, a poem by Sándor Petőfi, one of Hungary's most celebrated Romantic poets and a national symbol of freedom and revolution, was the first Hungarian literary work to be translated into Japanese, via a rather loose German translation. All that is known about the background to the translation is that it was done through the mediation of retired Colonel Baron Gagern and Paul Mayet (1846-1920), a German university professor teaching in Japan. In 1880, the journal *Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténeti Lapok (Comparative Literary History Journal)* wrote that Mayet had been "*promoting Petőfi in Japan for years*".[1127] The poem translated into Japanese was published in August 1880 in the journal *Ellenőr* with incorrect phonetic transcription. The translator was Kiyoo Honma, secretary of the Japanese Imperial Legation in Vienna. The *Vasárnapi Újság* also reported on the poem in a short news article entitled *Petőfi japán nyelven (Petőfi in Japanese)*: "*We recently wrote that a few poems by Petőfi had been translated into Chinese. Now Honma, a secretary at the Japanese embassy, who learned German in Vienna, has translated Petőfi's poem 'Reszket a bokor'* [The Bush Trembles] *from German into Japanese*".[1128] The complete translation appeared in the 1882 issue of *Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténeti Lapok (German: Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Literatur, Latin: Acta Comparationis Litterarum Universarum)* published by the University of Cluj.

[1126] 宮越勉『初期「白樺」の有島生馬と里見弴』In: 明治大学人文科学研究所紀要　第59冊, 2006, p. 196.
[1127] *Összehasonlító Irodalmi Lapok*, Kolozsvár, 1880., p. 1327.
[1128] Vasárnapi Újság 1880. aug. 22. XXVII. évf. 34. sz. Translated by the author.

Japanese readers could enjoy Hungarian fairy tales in 1904 as part of a series of booklets presenting stories from around the world, the first of which was a Hungarian tale: the original title *Vas Laci (Iron Laci)* became *Iron Prince* in the Japanese translation and was published as the thirty-fifth installment in the series.[1129]

Vas Laci in Japanese, from 1904

Another supposedly Hungarian folktale appeared in a Japanese translation of Franz Otto's *Der Jugend Lieblings-Märchenschatz: Familienbuch der schönsten Haus- und Volksmärchen aus aller Herren Ländern*, a 19th-century German anthology of folktales, sagas, and humorous stories from many lands. First published in Leipzig in 1883, it contained numerous stories collected and edited into a single volume. The Japanese version of the Hungarian folktale, titled 夢の三郎 *(Dream Saburō)*, appeared in 世界お伽噺 *(World's Fairy Tales)*. It featured an interesting twist in its illustrations, as noted in the introduction:

> "*This is the tale titled 'The Youngest Child's Dream', included in Otto's fairy-tale collection as a Hungarian folktale. Some may find it somewhat odd that the illustrations combine elements of Western European, Chinese, and Japanese customs; however, it is, after all, a fairy tale – and a dream story at that – so please do not be overly critical.*"[1130]

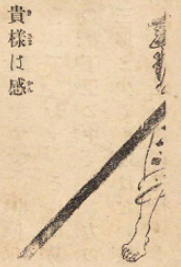
[1129] 世界の御伽噺、第三十五編ハンガリーの部、「鉄の王子」, Meiji 37. (1904.), Tokyo
[1130] 巖谷小波 (編)「世界お伽噺」博文館、1908

番息子を、御殿へ連れてお歸りに成り、『さて小僧！其方は昨夜見た夢を、親にも話をせんさうだが、どんな大切

な夢でも、已に云はぬと云ふ事は無からう。さア何様な夢を見たか。處て殘らず話してしまへ！』とおつしやいましたが、三番息子はまだ頭を振つて、『いゝ

の矢へ手を掛けて、エイ〳〵と搖振つたと思ふ中に、スルスルと譯無く拔いて、王樣の前へ持つて來ましたから、王樣は

手を拍つて御喜悅に成り、『あゝ、出來した、出來した。實に貴樣は感心な奴だ。それでこそ此間の、夢を云はない罪科は免すぞ。』と、大層御機嫌でありましたが、『いや、只拔いた斗りでは、又魔王がぐづ〳〵ぬかすから、迚もの事に御苦勞だが、是を魔王の所へ返へして來てくれ！』と、かう云つて御依頼に



Dream Saburō, 1908

Hungarian short stories were introduced to Japanese readers thanks to the famous Japanese writer Ōgai Mori. Alongside works by European authors, Mori translated three short stories by Ferenc Molnár (1878–1952) – *Altató mese (Lullaby)*, *Az utolsó délután (The Last Afternoon)*, and *A kocsi (The Carriage)* – as well as Menyhért Lengyel's (1880–1974) *Rettenetes (Terrible)* from German into Japanese between 1912 and 1914. These translations were published in serial form in the magazine *Subaru*.[1131]

Hungarian Silent Films in Japan

It is likely that some Hungarian silent films made their way to Japan during or before World War I. Admittedly, the few Hungarian sources available urge caution regarding the authenticity of reports about Japanese screenings,[1132] but experts believe that two Hungarian films were shown. One is the silent film *Tata, mint dada (Uncle as a*

[1131] 徳永康元『ブダペストの古本屋』Tokyo, 1982., p. 23.; Kume Emiko: *Magyar irodalom Japánban*. In: Tanulmányok a magyar-japán kapcsolatok történetéből. Bp., ELTE, 2009., p. 404.
[1132] According to Gyöngyi Balogh, an employee of the Hungarian National Film Archive, much of the news about foreign screenings was merely intended to promote the film's success and cannot be considered an authentic source. Advertisements found in foreign archives and written in the language of the respective country can be regarded as indisputable evidence, but Japanese-language versions are not yet known to exist.

Nanny),[1133] shot between October and November 1912, which, according to a 1920 source, became a “hit” in Japanese cinemas.[1134] The other film, which the Hungarian Film Institute also asserts with certainty reached Japan,[1135] was *Sárga csikó (The Yellow Foal)*,[1136] shot in September 1913 and known abroad as *Secret of the Blind Man / Hungarian Tragedy*. This film was successfully screened in more than 100 countries worldwide, including Japan, and was distributed by the French company Pathé.

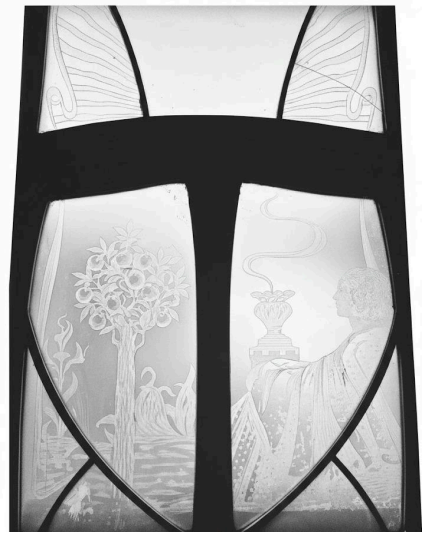
Japan-Related Themes in Hungarian Architecture

The very few Japan-related ornaments in Hungarian architecture appear in only a small number of known cases. At the turn of the century, a statue of a Japanese woman was placed on top of the *Adria Palace (Adria Palota)*. (The Adria company maintained headquarters in both Fiume and Budapest. In Fiume, the largest building in the city at the time – completed in 1896 – stood out on the skyline, greeting travelers arriving from the sea. Its four statues represented the different continents, featuring Egyptian, Japanese, Native American, and European figures symbolizing Africa, Asia, America, and Europe. The Adria Palace in Budapest, completed in 1902, was constructed as the counterpart to the Fiume building.) After WWII, the Japanese statue on the Budapest façade needed a new head, as the original had been blown off by a grenade. Sculptor Barna Búza dutifully carved a replacement – thus the Japanese lady became a Chinese man with a drooping mustache.[1137] (In 2020, the renovation of the Adria Palace began, and by 2023, the statue had been restored to its presumed original version.)

[1133] Directed by: Sándor Góth
[1134] Lányi Viktor – Radó István – Held Albert: *A 25 éves mozi*. Bp., 1920. According to Albert Held, he saw the film himself in Yokohama.
[1135] In 1918, screenwriter Janovics received a significant royalty payment from Japan in connection with the film.
[1136] Directed by Félix Vanyl. Screenplay by Jenő Janovics
[1137] https://www.kozterkep.hu/21720/Az_egykori_Adria_szekhaz_diszitoszobrai_Budapest_1903.html (accessed: 2025 Dec.)

The Japanese woman statue, and its altered form (a Chinese man) on the Adria Palace (kozterkep.hu)

Another example is a window in a house at 40 Wesselényi Street in Budapest, built in 1902 and designed by Artúr Mellinger. The window is an exceptionally rare acid-etched Art Nouveau piece. Created by an unknown artist, these white-on-white figurative glassworks are among the last of their kind in Hungary. The finest surviving example, located on the third floor, depicts a woman in an ‘oriental-style’ dress, seated in nature with incense in her hand, surrounded by an apple tree, water, reeds, and sun rays possibly inspired by Japanese engravings.[1138]



The acid-etched window of the house on 40. Wesselényi street (meselohazak.hu)

[1138] https://www.meselohazak.hu/a-titokzatos-keleti-holgyek-haza-avagy-csoda-uvegbol-a-wesselenyi-utcabol/ (accessed: 2025 Dec.)

Japan Fever, But Not Always for Profit: Balls for a Cause

There is one type of event in Europe where Japan fever was not linked to profit maximization: aristocratic circles often held so-called “Japanese balls”, usually around spring and carnival time, which focused on humanistic causes or raising donations. One of the most magnificent examples of such events was held in Vienna in May 1901, when Princess Pauline Metternich, a prominent aristocratic philanthropist, organized a three-day Cherry Blossom Festival in the Rotunda (the former World Exposition building in the Vienna Prater), attracting 150,000 visitors. The event combined spectacle with charity and economic stimulation: a replica Japanese pagoda village with exotic gardens and a high bridge was created, 400 costumed committee ladies sold raffle tickets and postcards.[1139] Cherry blossoms, decorative items and costumes came from prominent Japanese goods suppliers. Highlights included a Japanese teahouse run by notable Jewish women and a pavilion for art and industry, which raised significant funds, including 24,000 krones (equivalent to around 220,000 euros in 2026) from a single pavilion. The festival boosted Princess Pauline’s popularity, benefited fashion and flower industries, and reflected a broader connection between aristocratic and Jewish charitable efforts, rooted in the Jewish principle of *tzedakah* – the ethical obligation to share one’s wealth to promote justice – and the support of modern social institutions.[1140]

In the Kingdom of Hungary, large-scale Japanese-themed variety shows and (often charity-oriented) public festivities were held on numerous occasions – more than a dozen documented instances – roughly half of them organized during the Russo-Japanese War in 1904–1905. Even ‘Japanese fireworks’ appeared early in Hungarian public spaces. In the summer of **1883**, a *‘Japanese Fireworks Fantasy’ (japáni tűzijáték-ábránd)* was organized by the committee of the Marie Valérie Orphanage.[1141] In February **1887**, a “Mikado evening” was organized by the *Circle of Capital City Private Officials (Fővárosi Magánhivatalnokok Köre)*. A small hall was

[1139] 50,000 picture postcards were sold, some of them signed by the wife of the Japanese ambassador to the Habsburg monarchy (Nobuaki Makino)
[1140] Sophie Lillie: *Fürstin Paulines Frühlingsfeste - Weibliche Wohltätigkeit auf dem Weg zur Wiener Moderne*. In: Elana Shapira, Anne-Katrin Rossberg (eds.): Gestalterinnen - Frauen, Design und Gesellschaft im Wien der Zwischenkriegszeit. De Gruyter, 2023., pp. 42-44.
[1141] Magyar Polgár, 1883-08-14.

decorated with bazaars, pagodas, statues, and Japanese lanterns, and a series of comic performances was staged on the stage. The event featured a costumed audience, and its highlight was a participant entering dressed as a Hungarian "Mikado". The evening ended with dancing in Japanese costumes mixed with *csárdás*.[1142] An **1893** high-society masquerade ball in Budapest featured young women in ethnic costumes, including Count Béla Széchenyi's daughters: Johanna in Breton dress and Alice in a silk kimono with a large Japanese fan. Alice's portrayal was especially praised for her beauty and elegance, making the scene so captivating that a newspaper article suggested guests might pay extra for tea served by her.[1143] In **1895**, a themed entertainment event was organized by the Budapest men's singing society *Egyetértés*, which temporarily renamed itself the *Abrakadabra Beijing–Tokyo Art Society (Abrakadabra peking-tokiói művésztársaság)* for the occasion. The event was framed as a "Japanese-Chinese celebration" and combined music, dance, comedy, and exoticized cultural performances. The program included a parade, an orchestral march 'Mikado', couplets, a 'Chinese tea serenade', clown acts, 'African' singers and dancers (referred to as "Negro excentrics"), and a staged piece titled *The Siege of Beijing*. It also featured a medley (or something similar) labeled *Japanese salad à la italiana*. Guests were encouraged to attend in costume, and attendees were required to purchase fans, which served as entrance tickets to the event.[1144] In the summer of **1896**, a large event featuring Japanese fireworks was held on Margitsziget, organized for the benefit of the Maria Dorothea Association, the Journalists' Pension Institute, and the National Committee for Museums and Libraries.[1145] A charity event titled *Fényes est Japánban (Brilliant Evening in Japan)* was held on 16 January **1904** at the local Casino (Pécsi Nemzeti Kaszinó) in support of the *Women's Charity Association of Pécs (pécsi Jótékony Nőegylet)*. The program included dancing, and attending in costume was optional.[1146] In late January **1904**, a Japanese-themed ball was held in Kecskemét, organized by the local *"golden youth" (aranyifjúság)*. All attendees danced in Japanese costumes, and the ballroom was decorated with an image of the famous Derby-winning

[1142] Pesti Hírlap, 1887-03-06.
[1143] Vasárnapi Ujság,1893/16, pp. 269-270.
[1144] Nemzet, 1895-02-02
[1145] Pesti Hírlap, 1896-07-04., Fővárosi Lapok 1896-06-21.
[1146] Pécsi Közlöny, 1903-12-12.; 1903-12-18.; 1903-12-31

horse named *Tokio*.[1147] In early February **1904**, a Japanese-themed ball was held in Kecskemét at the city casino, organized by the local charity "*Rongyos Egylet*", a respected organization founded to provide clothing and support for poor schoolchildren so they could attend school. The casino's large hall was decorated with 'Oriental' motifs, and the event followed the popular Japanese-themed entertainment style of the time.[1148] In March **1904**, the reading and singing circle of the officials' wives at the Hungarian Royal State Railways' Locomotive Factory organized a *Japanese Cherry Blossom Festival (Japán Cseresznyevirág Ünnep)* in their own hall, with the participation of 30 ladies. The program included girls dressed as geisha apprentices and a Japanese fan and parasol dance. At midnight, a special edition newspaper titled "*Fe-tse-geő ki-tsi lap*" (Fecsegő kicsi lap, "Chattering Little Paper") was available for purchase; it was sold by girls dressed in Japanese attire, and the proceeds went to support the local casino's library.[1149] A *Japanese costume ball (japán jelmezestély)* was organized in Budapest in February **1905** for the benefit of the *Elizabeth Sanatorium (Erzsébet Szanatórium)*. Modeled after Japanese balls held abroad, the event featured the invited guest Henrik Pressnitz, a traveler who had visited Japan. The organizers prepared for the evening with great care, basing their plans on Pressnitz's photographs of Japan and his firsthand experiences.[1150] The organizer was the *Association for the Sanatorium of Poor Tuberculosis Patients in Budapest (Budapesti Szegénysorsú Tüdőbetegek Szanatórium-Egyesülete)*, which rented the grand halls of the Royal Hotel for the event. Female guests appeared as black- and white-masked 'geishas', and many members of the Hungarian aristocracy attended, including Archduke Joseph August and Archduchess Augusta. The organizers aimed to create a Japanese atmosphere by importing original Japanese objects from abroad, requiring women to wear Japanese dress, and decorating all of the hotel's halls in Japanese style. Fifteen private boxes were prepared for aristocratic guests. One hall recreated a street in Tokyo with a theater, temple, tents, cherry trees, and a ceiling painted to resemble the blue sky. Another was arranged as a Japanese marketplace filled with 'Japanese curiosities',

[1147] Kakas Márton, 1904-01-24.
[1148] Kecskeméti Ellenőr, 1904-02-14.; 1904-01-17.
[1149] Pesti Hírlap, 1904-03-06
[1150] Alkotmány, 1905-02-15., Pesti Hírlap, 1905-02-15.

while a third depicted one of Japan's famous bathing resorts with a view of Mount Fuji. The presence of Joseph August and Augusta was especially significant because they were among the most prominent figures of the Hungarian branch of the Habsburg dynasty and were closely associated with charitable and social causes in early twentieth-century Hungary.[1151] In February **1905**, the *Buda Choir (Budai Dalárda)* organized a 'Japanese festival' (japán ünnepély) at the Vigadó in Buda.[1152] An audience of about five hundred gathered in the hall of the Vigadó, which was decorated in a Japanese style. The event began with a concert by a military band and continued with dancing. Interestingly, the dances were given specific names, such as "Tokyo Csárdás", "Korean Waltz", "Liaoyang Quadrille", "Yalu Waltz", and "Yokohama Csárdás". Several dances were also named after military figures who had become famous during the Russo-Japanese War.[1153] On February 18, **1905**, the *Ungvári Korcsolyázó Egyesület (Ungvár Skating Association)* held a Japanese costume event (a "banzai ball") at the Ungvár (now: Uzhhorod, Ukraine) Social Club. Tickets cost 2 or 7 krones, and participants entered the ballroom to the sounds of a "Japanese march". Women wore inexpensive, home-made Japanese-style costumes, with masks distinguishing adults (black) from girls (white), while men wore tuxedos and tailcoats. The decorations, invitations, and even some paintings reflected Japanese motifs, and six 'geisha' performed 'authentic' dances. Forty women dressed as geisha in self-made kimonos, completing their look with hair sticks and small fans. The event was only modestly successful, raising 961 krones, with a net income of 382 krones, which was likely used to support the association's operations.[1154] In March **1905**, a Japanese costume ball and charity bazaar was held in Miskolc in the grand hall of the Korona Hotel. It was organized by a local merchants' youth association to raise funds for a planned *"Merchants' Hospital" (Kereskedők kórháza)*, and it generated about 4,000 krones in revenue. The event began with a street parade in Japanese costumes and also functioned as a bazaar. The hall was decorated to resemble a Tokyo street, including a Japanese teahouse and a setting evoking a Japanese excursion site. Young women

[1151] Pesti Hírlap, 1905-02-23.; Független Magyarország, 1905-02-08.; Pesti Napló, 1905-02-19.; Magyarország, 1905-01-25.
[1152] Hazánk, 1905-02-14.
[1153] Budapesti Hirlap, 1905-02-12.
[1154] Ung 1905-01-22, 1905-01-29, 1905-02-05, 1905-02-26

and men dressed in Japanese-style costumes took part in the festivities, which included confetti fights, Japanese circus performances, and an evening dance celebration, ending with a final grand costume procession.[1155] In **1905**, two "Japanese nights" were held during the carnival season at the Nemzeti Kaszinó (National Casino) in Szabadka (now: Subotica, Serbia), and were popular events.[1156] In February **1906**, a Japanese costume ball (*japán jelmez estély*) was held in Kolozsvár (now: Cluj-Napoca, Romania) at the city's Vigadó club. It was organized by the *Kolozsvár Ladies' Rent Aid Penny Association (Kolozsvári Hölgyek Házbérsegélyező Fillér Egylete)* as a charity event to support local poor residents.[1157] Between July and September **1906**, a *Great Harvest Celebration in Japan (Nagy szüreti ünnepély Japánban)* was held at Ős-Budavára for the benefit of the Association of Newspaper Publishing Officials, featuring an 'authentic' Japanese procession, a fair, a bazaar, and fireworks.[1158] In January **1907**, the *Budapest Women's Association (Budapesti Leányegyesület)* held a gathering at which the Vigadó in Pest was transformed to imitate, among other things, an Oriental salon and a "Japanese tea room", where local Hungarian artists and magicians with 'Oriental' names (Ti-Fu and Ki-ko) provided moments of joy for their audiences.[1159] In **1907**, the *Artists' May Day Celebration (Művészmajális),* organized by Hungarian artists and writers in Városliget (City Park), served as a fundraising event for the purchase of the Feszty House to house memorabilia of Sándor Petőfi, a Hungarian national poet and revolutionary. The gathering, attended by members of the contemporary elite including Archduke Joseph and Archduchess Augusta, featured a parade of illuminated galleys on the lake Városliget – among them a Japanese flower-decorated boat *(japán gálya)* – and ended with a staged parodistic "naval battle" and a fireworks display.[1160] In August **1907**, Benedek Balogh Barátosi, a traveler to Japan, organized a Japanese evening in Előpatak (now: Vâlcele, Romania) to benefit the Prince Joseph Sanatorium Association. The program included the Japanese national anthem and other Japanese songs performed by Barátosi's wife; a slideshow of 200 color photographs; a short lecture on

[1155] Ellenzék (Miskolc) 1905-04-04.
[1156] Bácsország II /15. 1905. április 9., 13., Bácsország II. Szabadka, 1905. március 12., 14.
[1157] Ellenzék (Cluj-Kolozsvár) 1906-01-11.
[1158] Népszava, 1906-09-07. Pesti Hírlap, 1906-07-28.
[1159] Pesti Hírlap, 1907-01-24, Pesti Hírlap, 1907-01-31
[1160] Pesti Hírlap, 1907-06-08

Japanese literature; a recitation of a Japanese ballad by Barátosi's daughter, Irénke; a Japanese march; a humorous Japanese song in both Japanese and Hungarian; and Japanese dances performed by Barátosi's wife and Irénke.[1161] On 6 July **1912**, Tettye (a site near Pécs) hosted a *Japanese celebration (Japán ünnepély)* that attracted thousands of participants. The decorations featured tents and pavilions in a Japanese architectural style, interspersed with thousands of flags and lanterns. The main attractions included military bands, Gypsy music, 'Japanese folk singers,' magicians, knife-throwers, balloons, a raffle, a 'Japanese bazaar', and women dressed in Japanese attire. One highlight of the evening was the 'appearance of the Mikado and his retinue in ceremonial dress', while another was a 'Japanese fireworks display'. The proceeds from the event covered the costs of landscaping and the renovation of the Tettye plateau. The net profit for the charity event amounted to 522 krones.[1162] (A precursor to the Tettye event was held during the garden opening ceremony of the Catholic Circle of the Pécs suburbs in June 1912 in Pécs.)[1163]

Although charity was usually at the center of so-called Japanese balls, business-savvy individuals also tried to profit from organizing similar events due to their widespread popularity. In **1902**, a *Japanese celebration (japán ünnepély)* was held in Pécs, although further details are unknown.[1164] On 2 July **1904**, a large-scale Japanese celebration titled 'One Night in Tokyo' was held at Ős-Budavára, featuring a grand parade of 500 participants, including palanquins, mounted riders, military bands, and a fireworks display.[1165] In August **1908**, a Chinese-Japanese festival was organized in American Park under the direction of the Tan Kwai Chinese troupe of magicians, featuring 10,000 light bulbs, a 'Chinese opium den', Chinese and Japanese fire-eaters, geishas, a Japanese teahouse, and a beauty pageant.[1166] On 11 July **1909**, a *Japanese celebration (japán ünnepély)* took place in Adolf Friedmann's American Park in

[1161] Székely Nép, 1907-07-16
[1162] Pécsi Napló, 1912-05-26., Dunántúl, 1912-06-04., Dunántúl, 1912-06-13., Pécsi Közlöny, 1912-06-06.
[1163] Dunántúl, 1912-06-05., Dunántúl, 1912-06-11.
[1164] Pécsi Napló, 1902-07-06.
[1165] Pesti Napló, 1904-07-02.
[1166] Pesti Napló, 1908-08-15.

Budapest, featuring teahouses, geishas, a confetti battle, and grandiose Japanese fireworks.[1167]

Of course, charity events were not immune to scandal. Contemporary evidence of this appears in an article published in January **1901**, which claimed that a similar *Japanese celebration* – supposedly organized under the name of the Workers' Casino in Budapest's 5th District to aid the unemployed – was likely more focused on fleecing its audience. The ball planned for February was exposed before it even took place: the organizers had intended to claim 25% of the projected revenue (10,000–12,000 krones), but the secretary of the Workers' Club uncovered the scheme in time, and the plan was thwarted.[1168]

Inevitably, these 'Japanese balls' received some contemporary criticism as well, due to their cosmopolitan, modern features, from circles that preferred the Hungarian 'national style'. Probably as a response and reaction to these foreign-feeling balls, we see *'honi' (native/homeland)* balls organizers emerging. One of the organizers of these national balls wrote the following in 1905:

> "*It is saddening to know that while social movements serving national interests are embraced abroad with exemplary enthusiasm in the capitals, in Budapest indifference toward such movements is widespread. The Silver Ball, the Japanese Ball, and other such festivities, which lavishly promote luxury and the consumption of dazzling products from foreign industries, exert more appeal than the Homeland Ball, which, though modest in appearance, is significant as an expression of patriotic self-sacrifice.*"[1169]

A subtle contemporary critique came from Baroness Gizella Malcome, a prominent public figure in Budapest in the early 1900s known for her civic engagement, feminist-oriented writing, and child welfare activism. Through her marriage to Baron Jeromos Malcomes, a government advisor in the Ministry of Agriculture, she became part of the Hungarian aristocracy and maintained extensive connections in high political

[1167] Magyarország, 1909-07-11., Pesti Hírlap, 1909-07-14. Confetti battle: a popular festive activity during 19th-century public events where participants playfully "attacked" one another by throwing large quantities of colorful paper discs. It served as a boisterous, interactive climax to social gatherings and carnivals. It evolved from the Italian *battaglia di coriandoli*, where real seeds (coriander) or plaster mimics were thrown during Carnival.
[1168] Magyarország, 1901-01-03.
[1169] Iparvédelem, 1905-10-15. Translated by the Author.

and social circles, which she used to support charitable and social reform causes. In her writings, she critically examined modern, seemingly emancipated women in Budapest, arguing that many were in fact superficial and shaped by fashionable foreign influences. Regarding the 1905 Japanese evening held at the *Erzsébet Sanatorium* in Budapest, which aimed to raise funds for poor patients with lung disease during the carnival season, she wrote the following:

> "*The vivacious, witty, lively, spirited Hungarian woman, swept along by the gigantic political tide – now that the political interest is firmly in the foreground, is keen on everything that is new in the world. (...) Of course, it goes without saying that beneath the authentic Japanese kimono, a '67 or '48 heart will be beating (the latter size being more flattering for ladies). (...) So let the Japanese festivities begin! Let's see how a Hungarian woman can smile in the Japanese style, even in times of trouble.*"[1170]

Beyond Observation: A History of Japanese Language Teaching and Learning in Hungary

Among the less visible yet fascinating chapters in the early history of Hungarian–Japanese cultural relations is the emergence of Japanese language teaching and learning in Hungary. We can be certain that interest in the Japanese language was already apparent in Hungary toward the end of the 19th century. This is evidenced by the fact that Japanese language instruction began in 1895 at the Ural–Altaic Department of the *Magyar Királyi Ferenc József Tudományegyetem (Franz Joseph University)* in Kolozsvár (today: Cluj-Napoca in Romania). The curriculum for the first semester of the 1895/96 academic year included two hours of "Nipponese" grammar per week.[1171] The Japanese language teacher was Gábor Bálint Szentkatolnay (1844–1913), a linguist. Szentkatolnay had already met Japanese people in the late

[1170] Hazánk, 1905-02-21. Translated by the Author.
[1171] Művelődés, XLIX. évf. 1996. április, 8. o.; lsd. még: Szenga Tóru: *Bálint Gábor, Prőhle Vilmos és a japán-magyar nyelvhasonlítás története*. Magyar Nyelv, 1994. 2. sz. p. 201.; See also: *A Kolozsvári Magyar Királyi Ferencz József Tudomány-egyetem almanachja és tanrendje az MDCCCXCVI-VII-iki tanév 1. felére*. Kolozsvár, 1898.

1870s,[1172] but we do not know exactly when he began to study the Japanese language.[1173] He was followed by Vilmos Prőhle (1871–1946), who became a linguist, orientalist, and university professor. Prőhle probably became acquainted with the Japanese language while writing articles for the journal *Keleti Szemle*. In 1899, he arrived at a reception at the Japanese embassy in Vienna, where he tried for the first time to use all the Japanese he knew in a conversation with a native speaker.

> "*Five years ago, I had an audience with His Excellency Kogoro Takahira in Vienna. Through quiet studying, I had gotten to the point where I could, let's say, babble in Japanese, and I wanted to ask the exotic nobleman to introduce me to the members of the embassy so that I could get closer to one or two of them and proceed more confidently on the path I had begun. In his reception room, furnished with true aristocratic taste, I was admiring the masterpieces of Japanese art when suddenly the following words startled me out of my quiet enchantment: 'Are you the gentleman who wished to speak with me?' Turning away from the screen decorated with a picture of Fujinoyama volcano, I saw before me a rather short man whose broad shoulders and broad forehead testified to great strength; but his slightly slanted eyes, sparse mustache, and above all his short stature seemed to demand everything but special respect. I myself do not cast a large shadow until the sun begins to set, but nevertheless, despite my humble dignity as a gentleman, I could hardly bring myself to say: 'Hei, kakka!' (Yes, Your Excellency!) as I had to look down so much when I stood face to face with the questioner, who was none other than Kogoro Takahira, currently representing His Majesty Emperor Mutsuhito in the capital of the United States. After we understood each other in a mixture of Japanese and English, His Excellency introduced me to Dr. Hata Riotaro, the embassy secretary, and Colonel Toichi, whose enormous moustache was only surpassed in prominence by the shortness of his perpendicular dimensions. We spent the afternoon together at the Parcifal café. Colonel Toichi played billiards, while being forced to*

[1172] Szentkatolnay was a member of the Széchenyi expedition, which took him to China, where he met Japanese people. He never visited Japan.

[1173] He began comparing Hungarian and Japanese words, and his student Prőhle later continued this work. Lajos Kazár later addressed the issue of Japanese-Hungarian language comparison in the late 1980s. The topic still pops up here and there, stirring up public opinion. More on this in Chapter Six.

either stand on tiptoe or climb onto the table. Dr. Hata Riotarou, currently first secretary to Count Inoue Katsunosuke in Berlin, was more willing to talk and answered my questions with great knowledge and even greater amiability over black coffee, while scribbling more and more intricate Chinese ideograms on the café table, with a skill that was still incomprehensible to me at the time. Judging by his narrow, olive-brown face and his chin, which lacked a bachelor's beard, he could have been considered a high school student about to graduate, according to our standards, but he was approaching thirty and, while he was so well versed in all things Far Eastern that no European could ever hope to catch up with him. He also displayed such thorough knowledge of our famous European science and way of thinking that it seemed as if he had never cared about anything else. Since then, I have come into contact with several Japanese people, including Dr. Shiratori, who is of most interest to us Hungarians. We drank more than a glass of Nyíri wine together back then…"[1174]

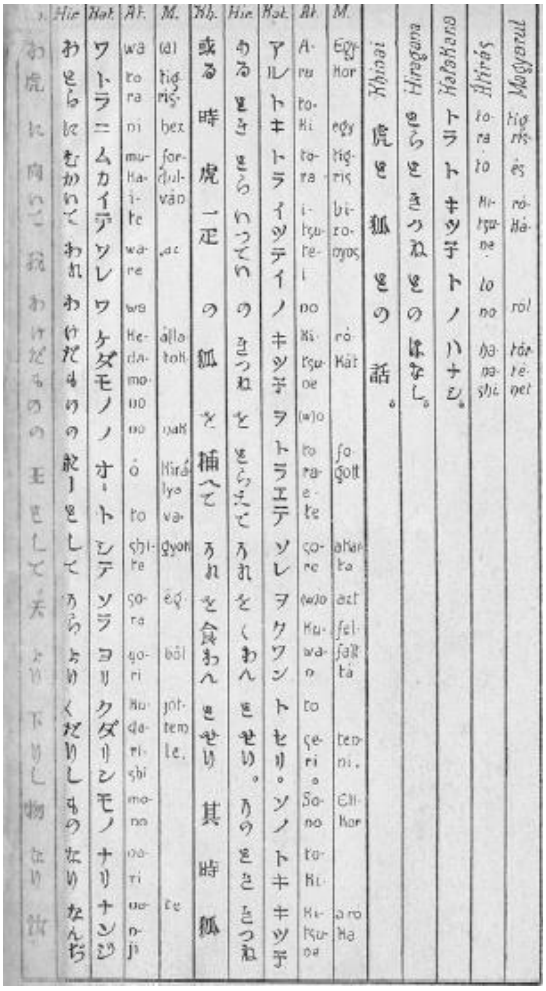
Prőhle was teaching Japanese in Kolozsvár in 1908. Apart from Szentkatolnay and Prőhle, we know of no one else who taught Japanese in Hungary in the early 1900s, and both were working on the periphery of academic life. This may have been one reason why hardly any studies on the Japanese language appeared in Hungarian before World War I. The first linguistic study was written by Lajos Ágner (1878–1949), a literary historian and orientalist who studied Chinese and Japanese at the University of Berlin on a state scholarship between 1902 and 1903. After his return, he published his treatise *A japán szókincs európai elemei (European Elements in Japanese Vocabulary)* in Budapest in 1904.

The first Japanese language textbook was published in Hungarian in Budapest in 1905, entitled *Japán nyelvtan – Gyakorlati japán-magyar-német beszélgetésekkel, hét eredeti japán írástáblával, a kiejtés pontos feltüntetésével (Japanese Grammar – with practical Japanese-Hungarian-German conversations, seven original Japanese writing tablets, and accurate pronunciation)*, as the 15th booklet in the *Rozsnyai Gyors Nyelvmesterei* series. Although the author is not listed along with the year of publication,

[1174] Prőhle Vilmos: *Dai Nippon banzai – éljen Nagy-Japán*. 1904. feb. 28. In: *Napkeletről*, 1922, Bp., pp. 39-42. Translated by the author.

it was most likely Ernesztusz Béla Győző Akantisz, who compiled several Rozsnyai language mastery booklets (German, French, English, Italian, Russian, Spanish, etc.). The Japanese language book consists of four parts: (1) explanations of Japanese grammar, (2) conversation, (3) vocabulary, and (4) Japanese punctuation marks. The first Hungarian-Japanese glossary, containing 1,325 words, was also published here. The significance of this thin, 64-page booklet is best illustrated by the fact that the next Hungarian-language Japanese grammar book did not appear until the 1970s.[1175] From the analysis of the booklet conducted by András Albeker, we learn that the Japanese language in Rozsnyai's Japanese grammar is spiced with elements of the Kansai dialect, while at the same time, through grammatical explanations and comparisons between the two languages, Akantisz took into account the specific needs of Hungarian-speaking readers.[1176] To date, there has been no evidence that the author, Akantisz, ever visited Japan and wrote the grammar book based on his own experience and knowledge of the language, but it cannot be ruled out that, lacking knowledge of the language, he received some help from Japanese people living in Budapest at the time. According to Albeker, the Japanese grammar shows great similarities to the Japanese grammar book published by August Seidel in Vienna, Pest, and Leipzig in 1890 (*Praktische Grammatik der Japanischen Sprache*), at least as far as grammatical explanations and example sentences are concerned.[1177] Another probable source used by Akantisz, which was also published in Hungary, is *Grammatik der Japanischen Umgangssprache* (1901). Among those not published in Hungary, the following may have served as additional sources: *Grammatik der Japanischen Schriftsprache* (1904) and *Systematisches Wörterbuch der Japanischen Umgangssprache* (1904).

[1175] 『ハンガリーの日本語教材リスト』国際交流基金ブダペスト事務所, 2009.
[1176] Albeker András『ロジュニャイ「日本語速習」の著者と出展について』, 京都大学國文學論叢Kyoto Univ., 2011, VOL 26. pp. 23-38.
[1177] Albeker András『ロジュニャイ「日本語速習」の著者と出展について』, 京都大学國文學論叢Kyoto Univ., 2011, VOL 26. p. 26. ; Albeker András Zsigmond: *Rozsnyai Japán nyelvmestere*. In: Távol-Keleti Tanulmányok, 2016/1. pp. 41-67.



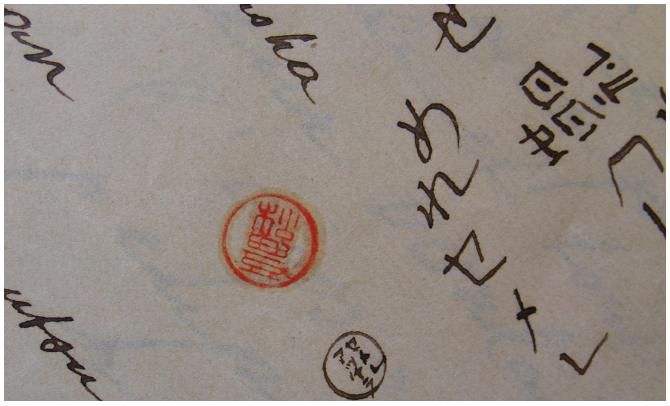
The last page of *Japán nyelvtan*

As the number of language experts grew, along with the need to translate technical documents, translation services started to appear in Budapest, offering accurate technical translations. For example, Ármin Neufeld, a certified patent attorney, opened a technical translation agency at 37 Kertész Street, District VII, in Budapest in 1908.[1178] The agency offered certified translations of technical descriptions, price lists, technical articles, scientific works, and other written materials in many languages, including Japanese. They worked with a wide network of translators both in Hungary and abroad.

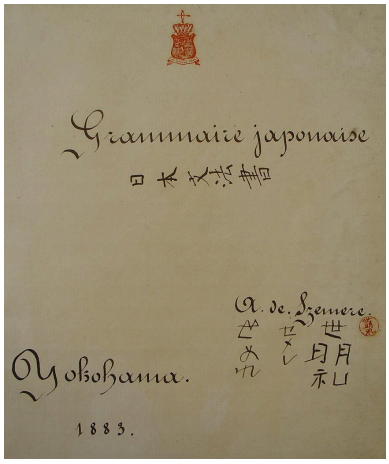
Hungarian travelers to Japan also began to learn Japanese long before the above language textbooks were published. Perhaps the most diligent in this regard was

[1178] Magyar Vaskereskedő, 1908-02-02

Attila Szemere. In 1883, during his stay in Yokohama, he began writing a Japanese grammar book (which could just as well be seen as his own learning notes), presumably with Japanese assistance, but he never finished his French-language manuscript. This unfinished 33-page draft of *Grammaire Japonaise (Japanese Grammar)* covers Japanese verb conjugations and explanations, along with example sentences, vocabulary lists, and dialogues. The text is primarily in Romanized Japanese and includes numerals, hiragana and katakana charts.[1179] The picture below shows Szemere's seal used in Japan and his Japanese name in several different transcriptions.



Szemere's seal and the hiragana, katakana, and kanji transcriptions of his name



Manuscript of Szemere's Japanese Language Textbook

[1179] アルベケル・アンドラーシ「ハンガリー人の日本語発見～幕末から明治末まで～ 2.」In: Monthly Hungary Journal, 2019 May, VOL 192. p. 10.

Among those Hungarian travelers to Japan who made the effort to learn the local language was Antal Velics, who probably attained a certain level of proficiency in Japanese. He was a hobbyist, self-taught linguist who published a booklet in 1911 in Tokyo: a collection and categorization of supposedly interlingual "word roots" with seemingly similar phonetics. He presented his "humble manuscript" to interested linguists in Japan, seeking their guidance.[1180] (We do not know what, if any, reaction came from the Japanese linguists.)

The small but fascinating Hungarian community of Japan included Szigfrid Komor, a Yokohama-based merchant who operated a curio shop known as *Dai-Butsu*. He also contributed a German–Japanese dictionary titled *Hand-Buechlein: Japanischer Worte und Phrasen*, published by Kelly & Walsh Limited, probably sometime between the late 1880s and the early 1890s.[1181] In the foreword, he notes:

> "*Just as Farsari's excellent little book, A Pocket Book of Japanese Words and Phrases, became indispensable for English-speaking travelers here, this little book is likewise intended to give Germans the means to communicate here without having to learn the language.*"[1182]

The content consists of approximately 1,400 German words. Corresponding Japanese translations are provided for each sentence, and at the end of the book, in addition to numbers and days of the week, a list of pidgin words is included. The booklet is written entirely in Roman letters, without the use of kanji or kana.

Alongside standalone books, journal articles also contributed to early Japanese studies. First, there is one article by Baranyai Zoltán from 1904, introducing the Japanese writing system. Baranyai explains Hepburn romanization, katakana, and hiragana in the general science magazine Uránia, and touches on the use of kanji in Japanese. However, his explanations and examples appear to be based on the Japanese textbook by the German Rudolf Lange.[1183]

[1180] Velics Antal『言葉の謎 The Problem of Languages, the Mystery of Words』1911. Tokyo. p. 52.
[1181] András Albeker dates it to 1894. アルベケル・アンドラーシ「ハンガリー人の日本語発見～幕末から明治末まで～ 2.」In: Monthly Hungary Journal, 2019 May, VOL 192. p. 10.
[1182] S. Komor: *Hand-Buechlein: Japanischer Worte und Phrasen*, Kelly & Walsh Limited (cca. 1880-1890)
[1183] Uránia, 1904, V. évf. 10. Szám; アルベケル・アンドラーシ「ハンガリー人の日本語発見～幕末から明治末まで～ 3.」In: Monthly Hungary Journal, 2019 May, VOL 193. p. 10.

In the autobiographical essays of Ferdinand J. Metzger Jr. (Ifj. Metzger Nándor József, later Watanabe-Metzger Nándor), we catch a glimpse of how an enthusiastic Hungarian teenager boy was drawn to learning the language in the early 1910s.

> "*One afternoon, walking past a stationary [store], [my] attention was drawn to a dozen beautifully colored post-cards of Japan in the shop window. Fantastically shaped temples, five-storied pagodas in gold, turquoise and vermilion, the snow-capped sacred Mount Fuji, the Buddhas of Nara, the red Torii gate of Miyajima, and a bevy of beautiful Japanese girls in their ceremonial long-sleeved kimonos with all colors of the rainbow delighted the onlooker. [My] feet seemed to have taken roots then and there. [I] had never seen anything quite like it. There was something surpassing the academic sense of beauty. All seemed to be the way of life for a classic people, who simply refused to go the way the Greeks and Romans had gone and eclipsed. (...) The next day I walked into a paint shop specializing in Oriental brushes. I selected a couple of Japanese writing-brushes and an ink-slab. At the stationer's next door, I bought a copy-book, then betook myself to the abode of some almond-eyed Orientals who were seen here and there in Budapest, peddling Buddha figurines to passers-by. They all lived in a dilapidated hotel in Szövetség utca. I asked for, and was reluctantly given, a writing and conversation lesson every afternoon, for about six months. I found great delight and satisfaction in imitating the ideograms masterfully "painted" in my copybook. I also learned their pronunciation. They were all monosyllabic, not agglutinative as was Hungarian. (...) I would go to my brook in Csömör. On sultry days I would kick off my shoes, and wade upstream in the crystal-clear and cool water, pull out my copy-book with the Oriental characters, study them for hours on a stretch, then chase frogs or try to catch the tiny fish that swam by my feet. Somehow, this well-known rural scene made an ideal setting for studying the exotic. At the end of six months I could write about six hundred ideographs, and could use them in a sort of conversation. (...) [1911] In a bold moment, I resolved to visit the resident [honorary] Consul-General of Japan in the Nyúl street. I had no difficulty in gaining admission to the consulate, and in a couple of minutes I already stood in front of the diplomat, who was rising from his seat at his desk to*

welcome his visitor. With juvenile courage- free from even a shadow of stage-fright- I took a step forward, addressing the [honorary] Consul-General as follows: 'Ngo shuot chung-kuck hwa. Hiaudi? Puhiadi?' The diplomat was knitting his eyebrows and I, somewhat perplexed, made one more try: 'Tung..Putung?' Whereupon the Consul-General took me by the hand, made me sit down, and started to talk to me. He wanted to know what made me take up the study of a Far Eastern language. Then he asked me to write down the words I had spoken in Oriental script. Finally he seemed convinced. He smiled, rested his arm on my shoulder, and said: 'This is a good start for a young scholar'. Then the Consul-General asked me to translate the words I had said at the outset. I said: 'I told you, Sir, that I spoke Japanese. Then I asked whether you understood me.' The diplomat could not suppress a little benevolent smile, and said kindly: 'My young friend, what you told me was that you spoke Chinese, and what you asked me was whether I had understood what you had told me. To put it straight, you mistook the Chinese peddlers of Budapest for genuine Japanese on account of their slit eyes: many Hungarians do it. Your teachers were Cantonese Chinamen, who taught you in their Cantonese dialect, not [even] the official Mandarin language!' Still, my disillusionment at the Imperial Japanese Consulate General in the Nyúl street stayed with me, and I didn't like it. On coming down the red-carpeted steps of that fine building, I tried to figure out what Napoleon Bonaparte felt after Waterloo, or Francis Joseph after Königgrätz. But such conclusions didn't sit very well with me. I wanted an Elba, a come-back. By nightfall I had a new strategy. I wanted to take up personal contact with Japan! (...) After leaving the Japanese Consulate-General, I boarded a street-car at the Városmajor, rode to the Andrássy-út - Teréz-körút crossing, got off, walked a hundred steps, and lo!, I stood in front of a miniature Japan in the huge plate-glass window of János Kotányi's paprika export and oriental tea import house. Almond-eyed geisha dummies, dressed in fantastic silk kimonos with gracefully long sleeves, brocade sashes, huge hand-painted fans with the sun-emblem on them, or the snowy peak of Mount Fuji. In unending variety, side by side stood richly lacquered folding screens displaying inlaid ivory-faced

oriental emperors, court ministers and ladies of the court, Mandarins and fishermen, miniature golden pagodas and grey, gracefully shaped stone lanterns that grace any art connaisseur's fantasy. All these treasures, however, were dwarfed by a huge Kamakura Buddha statue towering at the back of the display, with the final stage scene of the Forty-seven Ronin drama painted in color and hanging cherry-wood framed from the top of the wall. That shop-window of Kotanyi breathed Japan, there was no doubt about it. If I wanted inspiration, I got it, then and there. Of course, this was not the first time that I was browsing in Kotanyi's shop. This time I bought crêpe paper prints depicting scenes from the Russo-Japanese war. On the way home, I bought a dozen tiny electric light bulbs and a battery. At home I fixed the battle-scene crêpes on the wall of my bedroom, fixed the tiny light-bulbs and switched on the power, and every night I watched the scenes where General Nogi fought General Stoessel at Port Arthur and Admiral Heihachiro Togo sank the Russian Baltic fleet at Tsushima. (...) On my way back, I paused for a moment in front of the Rozsnyai book store. Grammars were on sale. To my surprise there was a Japanese grammar too, for [the equivalent of] 2 shillings and six-pence [in old English currency]. Pocket-size. I invested, and carried home my bargain. I sat up till midnight. Lit the tiny bulbs over the Battle of Mukden. I learnt that "good day", "good afternoon", "hello", "welcome", and "how do you do" have one common denominator in Japanese: "Konnichi wa", literally "good day". With that Rozsnyai Japanese grammar I forgot the Japanese Consulate-General, my disappointment, and once more I felt my sky-conquering optimism. After all, the Cantonese peddlers in that dilapidated fifth-class Szövetség-utca hotel initiated me into the secrets of Chinese ideographs, which formed the cultural yardstick of ancient and modern Japan!"[1184]

In his recollections, Metzger writes that he met Japanese acrobats from the Ryogoku and Yamagata families who were performing in Budapest at the Beketow Circus in 1909 and 1910. They gave him nightly lessons in spoken and written Japanese, which he pursued in secret despite strong opposition from his father:

[1184] Robert Melville Metzger: *History of our families* (April 19, 2020, manuscript) pp. 7-10.

"*My Japanese friends were late-risers, since they performed at about 11 p.m. In the afternoon they practiced their art, and they could give me lessons only after their performances, that is, around midnight. I never missed one of my appointments. I sneaked home around 2 a.m. Ferdinand Sr., my dear father, was deeply ashamed over my Japanese language studies. He, a German, used to say that the Japanese represented the yellow peril for Europe. He told me that if I wanted to learn exotic languages, well, I should learn Turkish or Persian- or Spanish, not Japanese. At night he used to yank out the electric lamp-bulb from its socket, to deprive me of light and stop [my] nocturnal studies of Japanese. To counter it, I bought a powerful pocket flashlight, placed it on my chest, pulled up my legs and placed my grammar on the incline, and tucked my bed-cover over me, to prevent any light showing in the room. Often I heard my father slowly open my bedroom door and whisper to my [step]mother that his son was soundly asleep. But I was not. I studied Japanese under the bed-cover all right, and it rather often happened that I really fell asleep while studying, and found the battery of my treasure, the secret pocket lamp, completely exhausted." According to national custom in Hungary, all tenement house-doors were closed at 10 p.m. Minor sons or daughters were to be at home by then. Who[ever] violated this ancient rule of decency fell into bad repute. My nocturnal Japanese lessons became jeopardized. But I found a way out. I made an agreement with the care-taker. He would let me out at 11 p.m. and let me in at 2 a.m. So, I could study continuously with the Ryogoku family, and then with their successors, the Yamagata family, for two months. My marks at school went down a bit, but my Japanese raced forward. By then I could talk more or less fluently in Japanese, and there was not a happier lad in town.*"[1185]

His growing skills soon brought him into contact with the Japanese lecturer Shūho Chiba (千葉秀浦 ?–?), who sojourned in Budapest to give public lectures in 1913; a Japanese couple, the Watanabes, who were living in Budapest and working in the household of Béla Dáni, a former military attaché in Japan during the Russo-Japanese War; and the journalist Árpád Pásztor, whose article in *Az Est* made him famous as "*the*

[1185] Robert Melville Metzger: *History of our families* (April 19, 2020, manuscript) pp. 10-11.

first Hungarian Japanese" and led to his appointment as interpreter to the Japanese consul-general in Budapest.

> "*Shuho Chiba invited me to his hotel, where I met again the Watanabe couple, the consul-general, and Mr. Pásztor. I had to give an account of myself, I had to tell them what made me take up my Japanese studies, what was my ambition, and how I expected to realize it. Well, I was very truthful about myself. (...) No sooner had I finished, than Editor Chiba spoke up: 'Metzger-san' he said with a bright smile on his face 'Kore wa watakushi no shimpai desu yo!' meaning "I will take care of that". He added that, after his [upcoming] lecture in Switzerland I would meet him in Zürich, and he would take me to Japan and give me the finishing touches of my knowledge of the language and people of that country. (...) On the next day, in the evening I got the surprise of my life: my dear father, Ferdinand Sr. came home smoking a tremendous, genuine Havana cigar. I had never seen him smoking a cigar. Rarely, he would light a cigarette. But now it was a cigar! He embraced me and kissed me. He very rarely did that. He was never too emotional, although everybody said that he was the best waltz-dancer in the Dual Monarchy. I couldn't figure [out] what [had] happened. I didn't have to wait long. He pulled out the afternoon edition of the Az Est [news]paper, brandished it, and gave it to me to read. The caption read: "The first Hungarian Japanese". Then followed my personal history, my mistaking Chinese for Japanese, my nocturnal studies with the Japanese acrobats in the Beketow circus, my father's adamant attitude to discourage my ambition, finally my success in the Urania theater, and Editor Chiba's promise to take me to Japan as his protégé. The article was signed by Árpád Pásztor, ever after my best friend in the country. At the end of the article Pásztor mentioned that, most likely, the Japanese Consul-General of Budapest, Eugen Palotay, being an honorary consul-general at that, will make me his interpreter-secretary, since he could not himself speak Japanese. (...) The appointment came in two weeks, and I accepted. To fill my cup of joy, I soon had the letter of Major-General Dány, inviting me to his house at 18 Disz-tér in Buda, where he asked me to call at least once a month and give the Watanabes a chance to speak Japanese and*

feel more at home in Hungary. I felt it a duty of honor, and accepted, and became a regular visitor at the General's house. It is also my duty to declare that this regular contact was very helpful in [my] pursuing my Japanese studies. The General provided me with valuable reading matter concerning the history, religion, arts, tea and flower ceremony of Japan. I became more and more immersed in a new life opening up before me. I received post-cards from Editor Chiba from Switzerland, referring to our joint travel to Japan in the near future. He also mentioned that he [had] entered a hospital for treatment. He [had] developed difficulty in speech. Once or twice, [even] in Budapest I found that he had some discomfort in pronunciation. But a young man is naïve: I thought it was only a malaise. One awful morning the postman brought me a letter. It bore a Zürich hospital's name. The secretary informed me that Editor Chiba [had] died the day before of cancer of the tongue."[1186]

His persistence is remarkable, and it definitely paid off, as this story shows, when he began stalking random Japanese people he happened to overhear on the streets of Budapest:

"*One evening, returning from General Dány's home, walking down the famous Dunakorzó (Danube Quai), I happened to walk behind two gentlemen, and overheard one telling the other 'Komatta desu ne' which meant something like 'I am confused.' Of course, these were familiar words for my ears. The gentlemen were Japanese, and I volunteered to find out what their trouble was. They were genuinely surprised to be addressed in their native tongue, then they told me that they [had] lost their way and could not find [their] hotel. Well, I took them to that hotel. On the way, one of the gentlemen gave me his name: Dr. Raikichi Arima, a lung specialist from Osaka. The other gentleman was Dr. Sandaya, a pediatrician from Osaka. They [had] attended a medical conference in Vienna, and had come to Budapest for sight-seeing. On the following day I took them around our capital city, and we vowed mutual friendship. On leaving, Dr. Arima presented a bulky Japanese-English dictionary to me, the first such in my possession.*"[1187]

[1186] Robert Melville Metzger: *History of our families* (April 19, 2020, manuscript) pp. 13-14.
[1187] Robert Melville Metzger: *History of our families* (April 19, 2020, manuscript) p. 14.

With the support of General Béla Dáni and his Japanese friends and acquaintances, Metzger deepened his knowledge of the Japanese language and culture and, in 1914, became a Japanese instructor at the *Keleti Kereskedelmi Akadémia (Oriental Academy of Commerce)* and assistant secretary of the *Turanian Society* under Count Pál Teleki, who later became Prime Minister of Hungary. Adopted by the Watanabe family in 1919 (and taking the name Fred Watanabe Metzger), he later traveled to Japan in 1929 and went on to serve as a Hungarian trade delegate and journalist. In 1931 he was named as an envoy of the Hungarian Ministry of Commerce for cultural and commercial relations with Japan and as a delegate of the Hungarian Foreign Trade Institute. From 1932 he lived in Japan, and in 1941 he became Secretary-Interpreter at the Hungarian Legation in Tokyo, remaining there through the war. After 1946 he lived in exile in Paris and later in the United States, but he always regarded his years in Japan as the most important of his life.

Japonisme and Japan-Fever in Hungary: Ideological Retrospect and 21st-Century Misreadings by State-Aligned Scholars

One might ask: how could Japonism(e) and the consumeristic Japan-fever be assessed in Hungary during the Dualism era? First and foremost, it represented a straightforward convergence with the global center's cultural consumerism and aesthetics. In the background, there was a faint trace of a self-perceived Eastern origin story of the Hungarians, promoted by certain ideological and political actors, but its significance in relation to contemporary Japan-discourses was less influential in the field of art[1188] and was focused more on other Orientalist notions and forms,[1189] which

[1188] Probably the one and only 'evidence' repeatedly cited in Hungarian art history in this context is a single sentence that draws a highly questionable and tenuous connection between Japanese art and Hungarian patriotic values. This sentence comes from the 1907 exhibition catalogue of Count Peter Vay's East Asian collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, in which director Ernő Kammerer wrote the following: "*And let it be, after a long time, the first link to the Mongol-Turanian culture, which developed with dignified calm and possessed such great assimilative power, with which the Hungarians shared common interests in their ancestral homeland for immeasurable time, and one of whose emanations is Japanese art.*" See: *Gr. Vay Péter-féle Japán gyűjtemény*, Budapest, Hornyánszky, 1908. Introduction written by Ernő Kammerer, translated by the author. The problem with uncritically referencing this sentence is that it reads more as an ideological-political statement than as a suggestion that certain Japanese artistic styles and techniques were used to develop or enhance a Hungarian 'national style'.

[1189] In 19th-century Hungarian historicist architecture, the dominant national style was often drawn from Western Europe (Neo-Gothic, Neo-Renaissance, etc.). However, Turkish and Middle Eastern motifs also appeared in

appeared primarily in Hungarian architecture at the time. While it is broadly true that Orientalism is deeply connected to how the West constructed its self-identity in contrast to the East – and while similar dynamics can be observed in the Hungarian case – the place of 'Hungarian identity' within this framework has always been ambiguous. Hungary has historically integrated into Western political and cultural structures while maintaining narratives of Eastern origin, yet its identity has generally leaned more toward the West than the East. Another point is that Japonism(e), or consumeristic Japan-fever was not truly about Japan; rather, it was a stage set used to assert Hungary's belonging to the Western or global-modern center (or simply to seize opportunistic possibilities for making money). Hungarian scholarship in Japanology and Japan-related art history from the 2020s attempts to link the formation of Hungarian (and even Eastern-European) identity to the adoption and use of Japonism(e). The topic is often approached both epistemologically incorrectly and unethically, as promoting such narratives seem to cater to ideological or political agendas, rather than produce rigorous scholarship. Their modus operandi is to conflate a *vaguely defined Japonism(e)* with an *implied political Japanophilia*, exploiting the resulting conceptual blur to operate unchecked.[1190] (In fact, this approach falters under closer scrutiny when we consider that 19th-century Japanophilia was largely Europhilic in nature – particularly Francophile and Parisophile – and often had less to do with Japan itself than with transnational, cosmopolitan European tastes and ideals.)[1191] Even if we were to stretch the definition of *Japonism(e)* to encompass *political Japanophilia* (supposedly early Turanist notions emphasizing mainly linguistic, but even anthropological-ethnic connections to the Japanese) it is highly questionable whether this 'equivalence' is

Hungarian art and architecture, reflecting a stylized engagement with the nation's perceived "Eastern roots". But even this trend has coincided with a broader European interest in Eastern/Oriental motifs (the "Orientalist" trend).

[1190] Given the methodological weaknesses and limited scholarly rigor in much of the existing literature on this topic, I will highlight only representative titles from journals and conferences in Hungary and Eastern Europe that illustrate the typical approach, such as "*Hungarian National Identity Impacted by Japonism*", "*Nationalism in Hungary's Japonism*", "*Patriotism, Japonisme, and National Identity in Hungary*", etc.

[1191] Greg M. Thomas argues that art historians fail to recognize that Japonisme and ukiyo-e were themselves deeply modern and urban. The trade in Japanese goods was tied to international capitalism and new middle-class tastes, while ukiyo-e prints expressed urban, contemporary experiences similar to those emerging in Paris. Edo's city culture paralleled Parisian spectacle. These cultural and social affinities show that Japonisme was shaped by shared modern urban conditions that art historians have largely overlooked. Greg M. Thomas: *On the Marginalization of Japonisme in Western Art History*. In: Japonisme Reconsidered: The Other and the Self in Representations of Japanese Culture, 2025. p. 96.

meaningful. Another major challenge to this approach is that even Turanism has Western roots: its conceptual and scholarly origins, the linguistic-ethnological basis, and its early academic framing all emerged through Western European scholarship.[1192] If Japonism(e) formalized or shaped Hungarian national identity in any ways between 1869 and 1913, it did so by pointing decisively westward and embodying a sought-after European cosmopolitan modernity. The thin ice on which certain researchers' narratives rest is the unethical academic legitimization of superficial connections between Hungarians and the Japanese: connections that inflate negligible or non-existent phenomena into something far more significant than they ever were – often without recognizing, or perhaps consciously *ignoring* (due to cognitive dissonance and the lavish Hungarian state support they receive) that they are reinforcing ideological narratives appealing to nationalist sentiments within contemporary Hungarian ethnogenesis politics. When ideologically charged presentism and political Japanophilia are superimposed onto the historical dissemination of the Japonism(e) movement in 19th-century Hungarian art, the obvious result is a distortion of historical understanding accompanied by questionable scholarly value. Not to mention that these epistemologically questionable approaches never attempt to raise challenging questions – instead overlooking them in the process – about how global, international, or transnational the production of national narratives and the narrative-making processes are, and whether they are truly narrowly and locally definable as 'national'. For readers not well-versed in Hungarian cultural and political history, it should be emphasized that political Japanophilia in Hungary intensified after World War I and underwent several metamorphoses before becoming one of the faintest 'intellectual' beacons of the extremist and far-right strands of Turanism, attracting odd fishes who still believe in a linguistic and ethnic kinship between the Japanese and Hungarians. Playing the ball to the feet of such eccentrics (odd balls themselves) should have no place in academia; therefore, the aforementioned poor example should be replaced with good practices grounded in scholarly rigor rather than state-backed ideological agendas.[1193]

[1192] This topic is discussed in more detail in Chapter Six.

[1193] The evidence for how these narratives continue to find oddball audiences still living within the *ideological lalaland of the 1930s* can be seen in relation to the Hungarian Japonisme exhibition *Gésák a Duna-parton (Geishas on the banks of the Danube)*, held in 2016 in Budapest (where the first poster at the entrance opened with a brief reference to the Eastern origins of the Hungarians). If one were to open the exhibition's guestbook today, it would

Another recent problematic trend among Hungarian art historians dealing with "things Japanese", who often work with a very limited intellectual toolkit, is not political or ideological, but stems from pure epistemological blindness – though it can have ideological undertones, as it enables uncritical and voluntary "cultural gatekeeping", serving nothing other than the narratives of Japanese soft power.[1194] These scholars tend to obsessively police and emphasize 'Japanese authenticity' or 'traditional Japaneseness'. Unfortunately, this approach contributes little to meaningful scholarship; it primarily reinforces cultural gatekeeping and overlooks broader cultural, social, and interpretive questions. The perception of something as 'authentic' can be based on an illusion, meeting public expectations without necessarily reflecting reality. This gap between perception and reality raises fundamental questions about authenticity. Jessica Boentges coined a playful term in relation to the authenticity of 'things Japanese', or more precisely, the illusion or image of what makes something supposedly "authentically Japanese": "Japanicity". She defines it as a constructed image of Japan – shaped by values, history, culture, and other factors – rather than actual reality, and one that evolves over time. Boentges points out that the concepts of 'authenticity' and 'tradition' remain important in current scholarship, but many authors discuss these ideas without defining them, leaving the question of what constitutes these aspects – mostly, if not completely – unaddressed.[1195] In Hungarian scholarship, 'authenticity' and 'tradition' in relation to Japan are often taken for granted, with no systematic framework or basis for discussion, making such discussions unproductive and incomplete. Klaus Anton

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reveal the very first message from one of the first visitors to the exhibition, which reads: "*I am happy to be here, because both the Hungarians and the Japanese are the children of the Sun; therefore, we belong together.*" The "*children of the Sun*" theory stems from the absurd idea that the Japanese word *"Nippon"* is related to a Hungarian word *"Naphon"* (*Nap* means *Sun*, *hon* means *homeland / native land / country*). *Nippon* comes from the Sino-Japanese reading of 日本, literally "*sun origin*" referring to Japan as the "*Land of the Rising Sun*". *Naphon* is not a real Hungarian word; it appears only in fringe theories claiming imaginary ancient links between Hungarians and Japanese. Japanese and Hungarian belong to entirely different language families, and the two words have no historical or linguistic connection. The supposed similarity in sound between a Sino-Japanese pronunciation of a Japanese word and its fabricated Hungarian "counterpart" is nothing more than a voluptuous triumph of armchair linguists' imaginations. Source: Guestbook of the *Gésák a Duna-parton* exhibition, 2017. Várkert Bazár-Szépművészeti Múzeum-Magyar Nemzeti Galéria-Iparművészeti Múzeum-Hopp Ferenc Ázsiai Művészeti Múzeum, p. 1. Translated by the author.

[1194] A typical example can be seen in a 2025 public lecture, where a young researcher, Mirjam Dénes, curator of Japanese art at the Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts in Budapest, made the following statement: "*Museums represent Japanese culture in countless ways, practically perpetuating and further communicating this kind of soft power*". https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDurthMNuqs (accessed: 2026 Jan.)

[1195] Jessica Boentges: *Representations of Japanese gardens in the West at the turn of the 20th Century: The case studies of Clingendael and Schönbrunn*. Master Thesis, Leiden University, 2022., pp 11., 26-27.

brightly argues that cultural elements in Meiji Japan that appear ancient or traditionally authentic should not be assumed to be remnants of the past. Each case must be critically examined to determine whether it was newly created, reshaped, or ideologically repurposed during the late nineteenth-century formation of the Japanese nation-state. Without such scrutiny, observers risk mistaking modern nationalist constructions for genuine tradition and producing an exoticized reading of national symbolism.[1196] At the same time, an epistemologically interesting issue arises when we consider the complex relationships between authenticity, modern art, and copying: a clear double standard is evident in broader Western scholarly discourse. In such discussions, too much emphasis is often placed on origin or source. To illustrate this, consider the following example: if well-known Western artists are inspired by Japanese ukiyo-e prints, they are celebrated as geniuses, but if a Japanese artist is inspired by those Western artists, they are labeled copyists. Modernity in art is frequently transnational, incorporating both local and Western elements simultaneously.

[1196] Klaus Antoni: *Kokutai - Political Shinto From Early-Modern to Contemporary Japan*. Eberhard Karls University Tübingen. 2016., p. 242.

Chapter Six.
Ideas, National Ideologies

Tracing Origins: Magyar Ethnogenesis, the Hun-Hungarian Myth, and an Obsessed Inquiry into an Ainu Skull – Japanese travelers and thinkers on the Hungarians – Contemporary documents relating to the Hungarians in the collection of the National Diet Library of Japan – Between Japan and the West: "datsu-a" and "yellow peril" – The beginnings of Hungarian and Japanese Turanism, writings on Japanese-Hungarian kinship – An Enduring Undercurrent: A Never-Ending Trespass Where the Knowable Ends and Wishful Thinking Begins – Hungarian Political Japanophilia: Self-validation, Wishful Thinking, and Basking in the Reflected Popularity of the Other – Learning from Japan, Comparison with Japan: A Recurring Topos in Right-Wing Hungarian Political Thinking – The Orbán regime's Like-Hunting in Hungarian Media Using "things Japanese" – Japan as an Export Destination for the "Hungarian Model" – Japan Rates, Hungary Celebrates: The Hungarian Media's Fascination with Japanese Credit Ratings – Paper Hussars (b)owing to Paper Samurais: A Joyful Shadow Play Between Debtor and Creditor – Populist Stew: An Unhealthy Mix of Neo-Turanism and Political Japanophilia

Tracing Origins: Magyar Ethnogenesis, the Hun-Hungarian Myth, and an Obsessed Inquiry into an Ainu Skull

At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the question of ethnogenesis played an important role in nurturing Hungarian national consciousness. At that time, it became more common to read about the eastern, primarily Hun, origins of the Hungarian people. Based on Chinese sources, the French historian Deguignes wrote his *Histoire générale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mongols, et des autres Tartares occidentaux (General History of the Huns, Turks, Mongols, and Other Western Tartars)*, in which he identified the European Huns with the Asian Xiongnu (匈奴). Shortly thereafter, in 1761, the Hungarian Jesuit historian György Pray took up the ideas expressed in this work in his *Annales veteres Hunnorum, Avarum et Hungarorum (The Old Annals of the Huns, Avars, and Hungarians)*, which later gained many followers. The Asian connections of the Huns, regarded as the ancestors of the Hungarians, revealed the history of a people of great historical significance. By the nineteenth century, the Hun–Hungarian theory

had developed into a system of ideas consisting of origin myths and a national characterology condensed into stereotypes. It gained new momentum through national romanticism, permeating the broadest strata of society. Géza Staud wrote the following about this in 1999:

> "*The awareness of the eastern origins of the Hungarian people was strengthened by the chronicles that had come to light and by national enthusiasm, which our historians also nurtured and sought to substantiate scientifically. The material of the legendary tradition became historical reality in the consciousness of the time and ultimately formed the starting point for a brilliant political idea. Széchenyi begins with our Asian origins in Kelet Népe [The People of the East, 1841]: 'The Hungarian people,' he says, 'have no lesser calling than to represent the characteristics hidden in their Asian cradle, which have not yet been developed anywhere else and have not yet reached maturity anywhere else.'*"[1]

The Hun–Hungarian theory spread to China and Japan, where it gave rise to several interpretations and led to polemics about Chinese–Hungarian or Japanese–Hungarian kinship. The earliest reference in Japanese to the Hungarians as descendants of the Xiongnu can be found in a work entitled *An Actual Account of the European Visit of an Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador*,[2] published in 1878.

Regarding the Japanese use of the name *Magyar (Hungarian)* at the time does not appear to have been common nor does it seem to have been a reference to the Huns: only two examples can be cited: "makiarēn" (マキアレーン)[3] in the account of the Iwakura Mission, and "majāru" (マジャール) in a work[4] from 1902.[5]

Hungarian ethnogenesis played a key role in the formative years of Hungarian archaeology and ethnography, partly because the Magyars did not consistently constitute a numerical majority within the Kingdom of Hungary. Throughout the nineteenth century, Hungary was notably characterized by the absence of any single ethnic or denominational group making up more than 50 percent of the total

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[1] Staud Géza: *Az orientalizmus a magyar romantikában*. Terebess, Budapest, 1999., p. 33. Translated by the author

[2] 久米邦武『特命全権大使米欧回覧実記. 4』東京, 岩波書店, 1980. p. 406.

[3] 久米邦武『特命全権大使米欧回覧実記. 4』東京, 岩波書店, 1980. p. 420.

[4] 最新外国地理教科書、1902.

[5] fubito.blogspot.com/2011/11/magyar-hun-xiongnu-nepnevek-japan.html (accessed: 2026. Feb.)

population. Only by 1900 did demographic shifts raise the Magyar share to 51.4 percent, followed by a further increase to 54.4 percent in 1910. This pronounced ethnic diversity posed distinctive challenges for politicians and scholars alike as they sought to define nationhood, race, and the complexities of multi-ethnic coexistence. From 1890 to 1903, Hungarian anthropologists, ethnographers, physicians, and public figures were deeply involved in what became known as the “Magyar face debate”, a series of inquiries into the facial features thought to be characteristic of Magyars. This debate represented a significant moment in a broader cross-disciplinary effort to define race and articulate the essence of Hungarian national identity. Its chronology was closely linked to two major national events: it began with preparations for the 1896 Millennium Exhibition, commemorating one thousand years since the Magyar ancestors settled in the Carpathian Basin, and concluded in the aftermath of the 1900 Paris World Exhibition. Both occasions were highly significant for national representation and offered ideal opportunities for scientists, physicians, anthropologists, ethnographers, and linguists to contribute to the nation’s self-definition.

The “Magyar face debate” took an unusual turn when Aurél Török connected Hungarians not with the Japanese, but with the Ainu. A renowned craniometrist and the founder of institutional physical anthropology in Hungary, Török helped establish the field, though it remained smaller and less central to nation-building than ethnography. The discipline’s institutional foundation emerged directly from debates over Magyar skulls. At the 1878 Paris World Exhibition, Török was outraged to find skulls labeled as “true Magyar types” that actually belonged to criminals of various non-Magyar ethnic backgrounds. After protesting, he was told that Hungarian scholars had done little to define the country’s racial types and was invited to study anthropology in Paris. With support from a Hungarian ministry, he trained in Paris and Berlin before becoming, in 1881, the head of the newly established *Anthropology Department and Museum* at the university, a position he held until 1912. Building the institute almost from nothing, Török expanded it from his own collection, holdings from the *Hungarian National Museum*, and donations from leading European anthropologists. It soon grew into an international center with more than 10,000 skulls and 1,000 skeletons, attracting scholars from across the world. The first Japanese human remains ever brought to Hungary consisted of an Ainu skull in 1878, followed, around 1884, by four complete skeletons and four Japanese skulls

sent from Japan by Dr. Dönitz, a professor at the University of Tokyo.[6] Aurél Török gained international recognition through craniometry, the branch of physical anthropology he focused on most. He developed various craniometers and, in 1890, published a methodological handbook detailing 5,371 skull measurements, 178 indices, and over 2,500 angles, triangles, and polygons, enabling calculations of more than 100,000 potential relationships. While this earned him the nickname “the reformer of craniology from Pest”, his extreme precision drew ridicule, with critics calling his work a dead-end or suited only for a hermit.

To his credit, Török later acknowledged the limited practical value of his exhaustive measurements in defining general cranial characteristics.[7] One can hardly deny Török's excessive obsession with measuring a single Ainu skull, brought to Hungary from Japan by Count Béla Széchenyi’s East Asian expedition in 1878, producing results that filled 386 pages in Hungarian and 700 pages in German publications over several years. One of his contemporaries, a Hungarian journalist, ridiculed him for this fixation, criticizing him for neglecting the study of Magyar types and arguing that while Török focused on an Ainu skull no Magyar had ever seen, the only relevant scientific insight about Magyar types was that they did not exist.[8] Indeed, Török eventually failed to define “pure” Magyar types, recognizing by 1892 the impossibility of studying them amid Hungary’s ethnic diversity. By 1906, he publicly rejected craniometry as a valid tool for racial classification. As a result, Hungarian physical anthropology declined, Török gradually grew estranged from his colleagues, and after his death, his department remained unfilled for many years.[9]

[6] Pesti Hirlap, 1884-11-21
[7] Emese Lafferton: *The Magyar moustache: the faces of Hungarian state formation, 1867–1918*. In: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, 38 (2007), pp. 706–707., 709., 721., 726.
[8] Tóth B.: *Magyar típus*. In: Magyar Hirlap, 22 April, 1–2 1893.
[9] Emese Lafferton: *The Magyar moustache: the faces of Hungarian state formation, 1867–1918*. In: Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, 38 (2007), p. 727.

Dezső Bozóky's photo (Hopp Múzeum)

Japanese travelers and thinkers on the Hungarians

The Hun–Hungarian or Japanese–Hungarian question aroused the interest of some Japanese travelers. When Kiyosuke Avadzu (粟津清亮, 1871–1959), secretary-general of the first Japanese insurance company, visited Andor Kozma, an official of the *Első Magyar Általános Biztosító Társaság (First Hungarian General Insurance Company)*, in Budapest around October–November 1900, they had an interesting exchange of views. A contemporary article states that both Kozma and Avadzu believed in Hungarian–Japanese kinship. "*A small island of golden race in a sea of silver race*" is how Avadzu described the Hungarian people in a letter to Kozma.[10] If we are to believe contemporary reports, in 1900, when a four-member delegation from the Japanese Ministry of Culture visited the University of Budapest, after listening to a lecture by Henrik Marczali, "*among other things, they mentioned that they were working to uncover the kinship between the Japanese and the Hungarians. The Japanese are very interested in this kinship, which they have discovered from Chinese yearbooks. These yearbooks contain many references to*

[10] Az Ujság, 1905-06-17 / 167. szám. Translated by the author

the ancestors of the Hungarians".[11] Kogorō Kanokogi (鹿子木小五郎, 1867–1922) spent a few days in Budapest from October 10, 1904, and wrote the following in his brief notes: "*There are 7.5 million Hungarians living in Ungarn, who are descendants of the Huns.*"[12] It is true that he had a tour guide with him, and he probably heard this theory from him (the identity of the tour guide is unknown). As for the "*racial similarities*" between Hungarians and Japanese, we find a comment in the diary of politician Sumitaka Haseba (長谷場純孝, 1854–1914) from his trip around the world in 1907.[13] Over time, several Japanese thinkers have addressed the issue of Hungarians: Ukichi Taguchi (田口卯吉, 1855–1905), Kanzō Uchimura (内村鑑三, 1861–1930), Sohō Tokutomi (徳富蘇峰, 1863–1957), and Kurakichi Shiratori (白鳥庫吉, 1865–1943) wrote on this subject. In 1893, Taguchi stated that the Japanese language is similar to Korean, Mongolian, Manchu, Turkish, Hungarian, and Finnish.[14] In his book on the concession territories[15] in Japan, he wrote: "*After studying ancient history, I came to the conclusion that we Japanese are of the same race as the Hungarians*".[16] In it, he proposed the abolition of concession areas in order to promote coexistence between foreigners and Japanese. In the book, Hungarians were presented as an example of coexistence with Austrians. He referred to the Hungarians as "*brave Huns*", some of whom, he claimed, had gone to Europe and founded Hungary, which dared to confront the Austrians in 1848–49. He believed that, beyond linguistic similarities, there was no doubt that the Japanese and Hungarians belonged to the same racial family. Taguchi considered the Hungarians to be descendants of the Huns, although he noted that some regarded the Huns as an inferior race. In his view, however, the Huns were "*in fact a respectable people, especially as far as the inhabitants of present-day Hungary are*

[11] Budapesti Hirlap, 1900.12.19. 348. szám. Translated by the author
[12] 鹿子木小五郎『観風雑記』, 大正2年, Translated by the author
[13] 『欧米歴遊日誌』1907., pp. 118-119.
[14] 『田口卯吉全集II.』 1990., p. 533.
[15] areas where foreigners were permitted to stay, reside, and trade
[16] 田口卯吉『居留地制度と内地雑居』明治26年 (1893). The concept of 内地雑居 (Naichi Zakkyo), which appears in the title of the book, was first introduced in 1871 and referred to the coexistence of Japanese and foreigners in Japan through the abolition of foreign settlements and extraterritorial privileges. While commoners associated the term with civilization and Western refinement, debates surrounding it revealed Japanese anxieties about Western influence and a perceived inferiority to Westerners. Intellectuals on both sides viewed foreigners as a potential threat, although the thinker Taguchi argued that Japan could successfully assimilate foreigners, much like the United States. He believed that naturalized foreigners could become loyal patriots and, along these theoretical lines, promoted the idea of a shared origin between Japanese and Hungarians, interpreting both peoples as "Asian" survivors of "Aryan" aggression within a Social Darwinist framework of racial struggle. See: Noriko Berlinguez-Kono: *Debates on Naichi Zakkyo in Japan (1879-99): The influence of Spencerian Social Evolutionism on the Japanese Perception of the West*. In: Bert Edström (ed.): The Japanese and Europe - Images and Perceptions, Japan Library, 2000. pp. 7-22.

concerned". He further asserted that "*today's Hungary is inhabited by a fair and beautiful race, the descendants of Mao-tun,*[17] *who migrated all the way to Europe, to Hungary*".[18] Taguchi was a renowned thinker, economist, and historian of the Meiji era who advocated the "Aryan origin theory of the Japanese race" based on research in comparative linguistics, causing a significant stir in society. Taguchi claimed that the basis for his "theory of the Aryan origin of the Japanese race" was a linguistic fact. In 1901 and 1902, he published works on the subject, which were met with severe criticism from his younger contemporaries, who argued that his arguments were inconsistent, the terminology was ambiguous, the reasoning was disorganized, and the main points were difficult to follow. Taguchi, believing that language and racial identity are closely linked, sought to classify Japanese as Aryan by comparing it with Indo-European languages. He argued that Japanese is distinct from languages traditionally grouped in the Turanian family – such as Hungarian, Turkish, Manchu, Mongolian, and others – demonstrating that Western classifications were mistaken. He compared Sanskrit with Greek, Latin, Persian, Turkish, Hungarian, and Japanese, arguing that Japanese grammar resembles that of the Aryan languages and differs from European languages, and used this to criticize Western linguists. While criticizing Western methods of determining race by language, he used similar comparisons to show Japanese grammar's similarities with Sanskrit and Turkish, arguing that Japanese should be classified as an Aryan language and that the Japanese people are therefore descended from Aryans. Taguchi's ideas about the origins of the Japanese were inconsistent. In 1895, in Theory of the Japanese Race (日本人種論), he argued that the Japanese descended from the Xiongnu, based on language, customs, and other traits. He viewed the Japanese as the most advanced branch of this group and emphasized their kinship with Turks and Hungarians. By 1905, however, Taguchi revised his theory. While still tracing the Japanese to the Xiongnu, he reinterpreted their status, claiming the Xiongnu were Aryans who had migrated north from India, Persia, and Turkestan and eventually settled in China. He suggested that events in the early Western Han Dynasty prompted their migration to Japan, framing the Japanese as both descended from Aryans and historically connected to Hungarians and other related peoples. From Taguchi's perspective, if the Japanese people originated from the Xiongnu race, their demands for colonial

[17] Hun chieftain, Maodunchanyu; in Japanese: 冒頓単于 (Bokutotsu Zen'u)
[18] 田口卯吉『居留地制度と内地雑居』明治26年 (1893) Translated by the author

interests are justified.[19] As for the later assessment of his work, a memorial book published in 1990 about Taguchi observed that although he attempted to support his historical claims – including his theory about the Huns and Hungarians – with 'scientific' evidence, he nevertheless rather arbitrarily connected historical legends with little basis in reality to established linguistic and historical research findings. The same book highlights that Taguchi's theories were essentially based on two pillars. One was the assertion that the Japanese were not inferior to Westerners in terms of knowledge or anthropology, and the other was the attempt to demonstrate their difference from the Chinese.[20]

Dezső Bozóky's photo (Hopp Múzeum)

The Hungarian people were also discussed by Kanzō Uchimura, a literary scholar and Christian thinker. Uchimura studied and lived in the United States for several years and wrote articles in English. He wrote about the Hungarians in 1897 (Meiji 30). In his view, European civilization was "*the most perfect form of civilization on Earth*", and therefore, for Japan, Europeanization could be a genuine expression of

[19] 李 凱航「明治末期における言語学と人種論の交錯 – 森鷗外・田口卯吉・新村出・藤岡勝二をめぐって」In: 或 問 Wakumon, 99 No.31, 2017, pp. 99., 101-106.
[20] 田口親『田口卯吉』日本歴史学会, 2000.

patriotism. In this regard, he cited the example of the Hungarians: in his opinion, like the Japanese, the Hungarians – whom he considered to belong to the Mongolian race – had also become Europeanized, and modern Japan should learn from their example.[21] Sohō Tokutomi, a publicist and editor, also wrote about the Hungarians when he visited Budapest for a few days in 1896 to attend the Millennial Exhibition: "*Being descendants of the Hiung-nu, they appear to have black eyes and faces that resemble those of the Japanese. (…) This is an Asian people who came from the Tianshan region*".[22] Toru Senga wrote the following about Tokutomi Sohō in connection with the above:

> "*…the Japanese publicist knew – certainly before his trip to Europe – that the Hungarians were of Asian origin. It is certain that he wanted to see the Hungarians in this light, regardless of what reality showed. (…) Even if the Japanese journalist had been able to distinguish Hungarians from other ethnic groups, the question of how 'Asian' the Hungarians – who had been composed of different ethnic groups over time – actually were would still remain to be clarified. In any case, anyone who arrived in Budapest via the Carpathians from what was then Romania – which had not only been under Ottoman Turkish rule until recently, but to which many 'Asian' peoples from the East (Pechenegs, Cumans, Tatars, etc.) had migrated – could also observe that, if one considers only the appearance of the population, the inhabitants of Bucharest are just as 'Asian' as those of Budapest, if not more so. Tokutomi, however, who evidently regarded language as synonymous with ethnicity, probably found a people who looked somehow 'Asian' there, thanks to his own prejudices and illusions.*"[23]

In 1898, Tokutomi wrote about Hungarians in a three-part article entitled "Hungary"[24] in the newspaper *Kokumin no Tomo*:

> "*Of the nations belonging to the Mongolian race or mixed with Mongolian blood, only the Hungarians in the West and the Japanese in the East have truly taken advantage of the general trend of modern civilization, keeping pace with the progress of the world, joining the civilized countries and adopting their*

[21] 道家弘一郎『内村鑑三論』Tokyo, 1992., pp. 189-190.
[22]『国民新聞』4 February 1897.
[23] Senga Toru: *Tokutomi Sohó, Vámbéry Ármin és a millenáris Magyarország*. In: Századok 128. pp. 710-711. Translated by the Author.
[24]『国民の友』March, April, May, 1898.

international character without falling behind in any way. (...) I do not want to assert forcefully that they and we are of the same origin. It is simply that when I see them, as Asians in Europe, so cheerful and competing in the arena of modern civilization, there is something that inspires my ambitions. Why should this not strengthen the spirit of a citizen of a new Far Eastern country? Do we not see in Hungary a living example of the so-called positive politics that I advocate?"[25]

Some accused Tokutomi of plagiarism, as parts of the article resembled passages in Ármin Vámbéry's book on the history of Hungary, published in English as *The Story of Hungary* (1886). Tokutomi later published this series of articles, together with his responses to the accusations, as a separate booklet in 1899.[26] According to the researcher Toru Senga, the book must have circulated widely for a long time, as it had gone through ten editions by 1915 and may therefore have played a leading role in Japan among writings introducing Hungary. The fourth Japanese thinker to address the Hungarians was Kurakichi Shiratori, an orientalist and lecturer at Tokyo Imperial University. He wrote about the Hungarians in 1905, but in a completely different way from his predecessors:

"*It is a widely accepted theory that the Hungarians are descendants of the Huns. However, in my opinion, the Huns were actually Turks and differed significantly from the Hungarians in character. (...) Today's Hungarians are completely European in appearance, and we can conclude that they bear little resemblance to us Easterners.*"[27]

In his view, Hungarians perceived their kinship with the Japanese primarily in linguistic rather than ethnic terms, which is why, he argued, the idea that they regarded the Japanese as brothers and considered them friends had become widespread. Shiratori had previously visited Hungary in 1902, including the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Oriental Academy of Commerce in his itinerary, reportedly because Hungary was the European country that interested him most. An article published in *Vasárnapi Újság* under his name states that he studied Hungarian and was interested in the kinship between Hungarians and Japanese, and that the purpose of his trip was to become better acquainted with the Hungarian

[25] Senga Toru: *Tokutomi Sohó, Vámbéry Ármin és a millenáris Magyarország*. Századok 128. pp. 714-715. Translated into Hungarian by Toru Senga; English translation by the Author.
[26]『世間と人間』, 1899.
[27]『白鳥庫吉全集』第十巻 1971., 10-11. o.

people.[28] Nevertheless, it is likely that he had other reasons for his visit, and that *Vasárnapi Újság* did not in fact publish his genuine views under his name. An example of this is Shiratori's letter[29] dated May 28, 1902, written from the National Museum in Budapest to a Japanese historian colleague, which reveals that he had studied the Turkish language and East Asian geography, as well as the history of Eastern peoples in relation to European history, and had ended up in Hungary by chance. It is a fact that in Hungary he became acquainted with, and maintained good relations with, Vilmos Prőhle, Gábor Bálint Szentkatolnay, Ignác Kúnos, and Benedek Balogh Barátosi – advocates of Turanism and of Hungarian–Japanese kinship and linguistic comparisons – but it is unlikely that he agreed with them, especially in light of his 1905 statement cited above.[30] When Shiratori visited Hungary in 1902, a poem containing incorrect Japanese spellings was published in the Hungarian press.[31] It is said to have been written by him and praises the kinship between Japan and Hungary:

Japanese 'original' as it appeared in the newspaper	Hungarian original	Possible Japanese transcription (by András Albeker)[32]
	Mióta ők elváltak,	立ち別れ
Tatji vakare, Ikujo henuram!	Mennyi év telt el!	幾世経ぬらむ
Harakarano Juisienu katare	A testvéreknek	同胞の
Haruno juno cuki	Ősmultját te mondd el	古（の？）語れ
	Ó hold, a tavaszi éjen!	春の夜の月

Contemporary documents relating to the Hungarians in the collection of the National Diet Library of Japan

In order to examine whether the influence of the above-mentioned Japanese thinkers is reflected in other publications and textbooks of the time, I consulted the Meiji-era archives of the National Diet Library of Japan as a reliable official source. According to my research, Meiji-period texts that not only present Hungary and the

[28] Vasárnapi Újság, 1902. április 27. p. 271.
[29] 史学会, 史学雑誌 August 1902. (Senga published the complete Hungarian translation of the letter here: Senga Toru: *Shiratori Kurakichi és a magyar nyelvészek századunk elején*, Magyar Nyelv, 91. évf., 2. szám, 1995. pp. 163-164.)
[30] Senga Toru: *Shiratori Kurakichi és a magyar nyelvészek századunk elején*, Magyar Nyelv, 91. évf., 2. szám, 1995. pp. 166-167.
[31] Pesti Napló, 1902-04-27.
[32] http://fubito.blogspot.com/2020/03/blog-post.html (accessed: 2026 May)

Hungarians but also refer to their Asian origins in some way can be summarized as follows:

- **one** describes the Hungarians as a "*yellow race*" (1903)[33]
- **two** mention the Hun–Hungarian myth: "*Hungary is part of the Huns, that is, a country founded by the Hungarians*" (1904 and 1905)[34]
- **one** document discusses the Árpád dynasty as follows: "*the heirs of the blood of Attila, king of the Huns*" (1905)[35]
- **one** addresses Mongolian kinship: "*In Hungary, Hungarians are in the majority, and they are related to Mongolians.*" (1907)[36]
- **one** mentions the Hun–Hungarian and Japanese–Hungarian relationship: "*The Hungarians mixed with the Huns who lived in northern China, so in a sense they are our brothers.*" (1910)[37]

It is clear that documents dealing with the Asian origins of the Hungarians, and specifically with the Hun–Hungarian and Japanese–Hungarian relationships, are very few in number in Meiji-era publications – at least among those that have been digitized[38] and made available by the National Diet Library of Japan. Even these were published during or around the time of the Russo–Japanese War, and there are no clear references to the above-mentioned Japanese thinkers in these texts. (Interestingly, the 1903 book describing Hungarians as a "yellow race" was a secondary school textbook.)

Dezső Bozóky's photo (Hopp Múzeum)

[33]『最新外国地理学科書』、中等教育教授法研究会, 1903.
[34] 井原儀『最新世界中古史』, 1904-1905.
[35] 河野元三『蒙古史』, 1905.
[36] 池田鹿之助『補習用受験用外国地理』1907.
[37] 高須芳次郎『百傑スケッチ』, 1910.
[38] it is important to note that my 2013–14 research may now yield different results due to increased digitization

Between Japan and the West: "datsu-a" and "yellow peril"

The image of Hungarians as an Asian people, reflected in contemporary Japanese documents, emerged in the 1890s and reappeared in the early 1900s. This was shaped by the ideological force fields of "datsu-a" and by Japan's countercampaign against the European notion of the "yellow peril" (in German: *Gelbe Gefahr*). The wars occurring around the time of these ideological debates – the Sino–Japanese War of 1895 and the Russo–Japanese War of 1904–05 – inevitably amplified these discourses. The "datsu-a" (脱亜) ideology represented a program of spiritual detachment from Asia. The theory originated with Yukichi Fukuzawa, who wrote about it in an article[39] in March 1885 (Meiji 18) in the daily newspaper he founded, *Jiji Shinpō*. According to this theory, although Japan belongs to Asia geographically, the Japanese people must shed their attachment to Asia and their blind adherence to its traditions in order to turn toward Western civilization. Japan's neighbors, China and Korea, were seen as unwilling to accept the West and unable to break away from Confucian ideas. A country that does not embrace European civilization would be unable to maintain its independence. Japan's role, therefore, would be to help China and Korea become "civilized" while protecting its own independence – only in this way could it avoid being dominated by Western powers. The irony of this article's publication is that the failure of the Gapsin Coup (1884) in Seoul prompted Fukuzawa to write *Datsu-A Ron*. He had supported Korean modernizers, even hosting some at his school, but when conservatives backed by China crushed the coup, he became disillusioned and articulated a new vision for Japan's role in Asia. Only in relation to China could Japan plausibly aspire to the title of Asia's leader. It became important for Japan to distance itself from "Asian" origins, since Western powers often viewed Asia as a single, undifferentiated entity and tended to look down on both Japan and China alike. Through unequal treaties and diplomatic pressure, the West forced Japan to confront what it perceived as its own backwardness. If Japan wished to overcome this position, it needed a driving force for transformation. Many Japanese thinkers found this motivation in the idea of Asian strength and in the notion that Japan could represent Asia to the West. Over time, this sense of mission evolved and became one of the ideological engines behind

[39] 福沢諭吉『脱亜論』In: 時事新報, 1885年3月16日（明治18年）

Japan's aspirations to great-power status. Meiji-era Japan faced an ongoing and complex debate about national identity[40] that echoed earlier discussions about its relationship with China. Rather than narrowing neatly to a single question, the debate revolved around competing visions of Japan's place in the world. Some thinkers argued that Japan should define its policies strictly in terms of national self-interest, grounded in its distinct historical heritage and rapid modernization. Others proposed that Japan should see itself as part of a broader East Asian – or even Asian – geopolitical and cultural community. Within this second perspective, opinions also differed. Certain intellectuals emphasized solidarity with other Asian societies in the face of Western imperialism, suggesting that Japan, as the most powerful Asian state, had a special responsibility to assist its neighbors. Nevertheless, this idea of leadership often coexisted with assumptions about Japan's superiority and sometimes justified a hierarchical or interventionist stance rather than genuine equality. These debates were strongly shaped by a profound reassessment of China beginning in the 1860s. Japanese travelers and observers reported that Qing China no longer resembled the idealized civilization long admired in Confucian scholarship. In response to these changing perceptions, commentators redefined China in various and sometimes contradictory ways – as backward and stagnant, as reformable and modernizing, or as a fellow Asian society struggling under Western pressure.[41] About twenty years after the emergence of the Datsu-A theory, Europe – especially Germany and France – was gripped by discussions of the "Yellow Peril". This notion drew on long-standing European memories of Asia associated with so-called barbarian hordes, dating back to the era of Genghis Khan and the Mongol invasions. At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, the 'theory' resurfaced prominently in European public discourse within the complex global power structure shaped by Russia, France, Britain, the United States, Germany, and a rapidly modernizing Japan. Underlying fears of the 'yellow peril' were anxieties about the potential economic and demographic challenges posed by Japan and China to European dominance. Europe, however, was far from united in its assessment of the issue. Even within individual countries, interpretations varied, as political actors

[40] During the 1880s, terms such as "national style/essence" (国粋) or even expressions like "national" or "Japanese" (国民的, 日本的) did not yet exist in the language. Although the word "ethnicity" (民族) was present, it was not widely used in general discourse. See: 鵜殿篤: 明治10年代の美術における国粋主義の検討. p. 52. https://meganeculture.boo.jp/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/article2013.pdf (accessed: 2026 March)

[41] Conrad Totman: *Japán története*, Osiris Kiadó, 2006., 479-480. o.

framed and instrumentalized the idea in different ways depending on their interests and agendas. In general, it was widely believed that Japan, through its political influence and military tutelage over China, might align itself with China's vast population of 400 million and, together, seek to challenge Western imperialism. There were growing fears that Europe's 'supremacy' could soon come to an end. Japan's successive military victories certainly fueled such anxieties. Its defeat of China in 1895 immediately aroused suspicion among the European powers, including Germany, which had strong territorial and commercial interests in East Asia. Emperor Wilhelm II of Germany, determined to preserve Germany's position in East Asia yet cautious about overreliance on alliances with other European great powers, sought to alert fellow rulers to what he perceived as an emerging Asian threat.[42]

Hermann Knackfuss: *Die Gelbe Gefahr*. 1895.

The warning was conveyed through a drawing commissioned by William II in 1895 from Hermann Knackfuss, professor of art history at the Kassel Academy of Art. The drawing depicts the Archangel Michael, a symbol of Germany, standing on a mountain before the other great powers (seven armed women holding shields). He turns toward them, pointing east with his left hand to another rock where Buddha sits, gazing at them, with an ominous rather than peaceful halo above his head. The caption reads: *"Europeans! Protect your most sacred possessions!*". According to the accompanying commentary, the seated Buddha looks on at the destruction with a

[42] Jing Tsu: *Failure, Nationalism, and Literature: The Making of Modern Chinese Identity, 1895-1937*. Stanford Univ. Press, 2005. pp. 78-80.

cold gaze. Wilhelm sent several copies of the image to European rulers, including the Russian tsar. In America, it appeared in print in 1898 in the New York Times. The image was distributed throughout Europe and also appeared on ships flying the German flag bound for East Asia.

A 1904 (Meiji 37) propaganda map celebrating Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War. Austria-Hungary appears near the center of the enlarged detail. (bostonraremaps.com)

The beginnings of Hungarian and Japanese Turanism, writings on Japanese-Hungarian kinship

Despite European fears, Hungarian public opinion was fundamentally sympathetic to the Japanese, a sentiment that can be traced back to the early 20th century. Japan's modernization, military successes, and emergence as a great power – especially during the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), when Hungarians held anti-Russian views – fostered sympathy for Japanese imperialism. It seems that, in diplomatic terms, Hungary first took notice of Japan around the time of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance (1902), when Japan officially joined the ranks of the great powers. Sadayakko, the first Japanese actress to gain recognition in Europe, and her husband wrote to a Japanese newspaper in 1902 after their performance in Budapest:

> "*Hungary will not forget its desire for revenge against the Russians, and since European newspapers are now competing to report on the Japan–England treaty, Hungarian sympathy for the Japanese has suddenly skyrocketed. It is truly gratifying that we arrived at precisely this moment…*"[43]

At the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War, a Hungarian newspaper declared: "*it is impossible for this major world event in East Asia not to affect the development of our nation's thinking and the raising of its national consciousness*".[44] The sympathy that had emerged following the Anglo-Japanese Alliance and the Russo-Japanese War was further strengthened by the organized spread of Turanism between 1910 and 1913. The term 'Turanism', originally denoting a political ideology, derives from the work of the Finnish nationalist and linguist Matthias Alexander Castrén, whose theories on the linguistic and ethnic affinities of the Ural-Altaic peoples later influenced the development of Pan-Turanism. (Pan-Turanism was the belief in the racial unity and future greatness of the Ural-Altaic peoples.) 'Turanism' was also used by the German-born English linguist Max Müller,[45] to refer to the non-Indo-European and non-Semitic languages of Europe and Asia (excluding Chinese). Although this

[43]『都新聞』1902, 4. 9. Translated by the author
[44] Magyarország, 1904. július 21. Translated by the author
[45] In 1874, Max Müller visited Budapest at the invitation of Ármin Vámbéry to lecture on his book *The Science of Language*. His talks were popular among Hungarian supporters of Turkic linguistic origins. By the turn of the century, Turanism gained appeal because it seemed to reconcile Finno-Ugric and Turkic linguistic ties, Hun traditions, and modern linguistic research.

original linguistic meaning was later abandoned, the term persisted. In its narrowest sense, Turanism referred to the supposed "Ural-Altaic"[46] language family, a now largely abandoned classification that grouped Hungarians, as members of the Ugric branch of the Uralic peoples, with Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic peoples and, more distantly, with Altaic-speaking peoples such as Turks, Tatars, Mongols, Japanese, and Koreans. At the dawn of the movement in Hungary, a far broader – and undeniably vaguer – definition emerged, one that revealed a rather romantic imagination:

> "*This concept is still new and unusual for most of us. It refers to our ancestral homeland, our great past, and perhaps an even greater future. It is a bold and ambitious goal, which we Hungarians are fortunate to have been entrusted with. Not with the sword, but through serious science, creative art, persistent work, and purposeful enterprise – in other words, with the noblest and most authentic instruments of modern civilization – we must ensure spiritual, moral, and material progress for ourselves and for our brothers among the educated peoples of the world. To explore and flourish with love and success across Europe and Asia, from Devény to Tokyo, in the past, present, and future, gaining friends and allies for our own benefit and that of the world at large. This is our goal, and let us all unite in its pursuit.*"[47]

In the wake of developments following the Compromise of 1867, the Hungarian political elite recognized that the time had come for Hungary to leverage its growing industrial and economic influence within the Monarchy in its foreign policy, a factor that also fueled Hungarian nationalism at the turn of the century. Turanism was thus seen as a guarantee of the Hungarian people's survival amid the two major

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[46] As László Károly notes, the hypothesis of the so-called Altaic language family was first proposed by Gustaf J. Ramstedt and Nicholas N. Poppe in the early decades of the twentieth century. According to this hypothesis, the Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic languages form a genealogical family. Ramstedt immediately added Korean to the discussion, and Japanese was later included as a fifth member of the hypothetical language family. Originally, scholars attempted to prove this relationship mainly through etymology – by identifying similar words across languages – but this approach has increasingly been criticized as insufficient and outdated. More recently, some researchers have turned to morphological evidence (grammar patterns), arguing that it may be more reliable; however, this method is also not definitive and can lead to errors if overused. The field has been divided into supporters, opponents, and skeptics, often resulting in heated and unproductive debates. Critics argue that many studies rely on weak comparisons, ignore key principles of historical linguistics, and present uncertain claims as established facts. Overall, the question remains unresolved, and there is still no conclusive evidence that the so-called Altaic languages are genealogically related to each other. László Károly: Václav Blažek, in collaboration with Michal Schwarz and Ondřej Srba: A*ltaic Languages. History of research, survey, classification and a sketch of comparative grammar.* (Book review) In: Orientalia Suecana, 2023. Vol. 72. pp. 69-70., 72-73., 75., Uppsala, https://doi.org/10.33063/os.v72.451

[47] Paikert Alajos: *Turán*. In: Turán, 1913/1. Translated by the author

pan-movements of the era – Pan-Germanism and Pan-Slavism.[48] The movement began to operate within an organized framework in 1910, with the founding of the Hungarian *Turáni Társaság (Turanian Society)*, initially aimed at uniting 'Turanian aspirations' and promoting 'Oriental' studies. Let us look at an excerpt from the society's founding charter:

> *"The purpose of the society is to study and develop the science, art, and economics of European and Asian peoples related to us, and to bring them into harmony with Hungarian interests. The society is altruistic in nature and excludes politics, religious and denominational issues, and personal interests from its activities. Its activities are primarily scientific in nature and do not involve business."* [49]

The members came from three main groups: representatives of the political and economic elite, scientists (geographers, ethnographers, historians), and Turanian "activists" who were well-travelled. From 1913, the society published a journal entitled Turán, which eventually ceased publication due to financial reasons. The *Turáni Társaság (Turanian Society)* was revived in 1916 under the name *Magyar Keleti Kultúrközpont (Hungarian Eastern Cultural Center)*. The first issue of the journal *Turán* contains an article about the Japanese:

> "*Japan, (...) the easternmost branch of the Turanian peoples (...) aspires to the same position in the Far East that England holds in the West. The extraordinary intelligence, diligence, courage, and political acumen of the Japanese continue to qualify them for a major role in world history. (...) And we Hungarians, the westernmost representatives of the Turanians in the heart of Europe, are called to do the same (...).*"[50]

Over time, Turanism has developed into a broad and multifaceted concept. It began as an effort to locate the eastern origins of the Hungarian people and to explore their linguistic and cultural connections. In reality, however, regardless of how strongly Hungarian Turanists refuted it, the concept slipped into political thinking from the very beginning of the movement, influencing ideas about alliances and Hungary's geopolitical orientation. It came to include ambitions for cultural and economic

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[48] Ablonczy Balázs*: Lándzsahegy, néprokonság, small talk - Turanizmus és keleti gondolat a két világháború közötti magyar külpolitikai gondolkodásban*; a VI. Hungarológiai Kongresszus (Debrecen, 2006. augusztus 22–26.) szimpóziumának anyaga

[49] Turán, 1913/1. Translated by the author

[50] Turán, 1913/1. Translated by the author

influence beyond Hungary, even taking on imperialistic dimensions in regions such as the Balkans, the Middle East, and across Asia. In addition, Turanism has been used to reinterpret Hungary's role as a bridge between East and West, while promoting new alliances and leadership roles. To its credit, Turanism helped spread knowledge about Asia, inspired artistic and literary works through its fascination with "Turanian" motifs and Orientalist themes, and encouraged political interest in Hungary's supposed Eastern connections. Yet behind this impressive parade of cultural enthusiasm lay a foundation of rather fragile reasoning and historical assumptions that were, at best, highly debatable.

(Japan – Korea – China) Reise-Erinnerungen 1903. Photo Album of Ferenc Hopp's travel to the Far-East (private collection)

Turanism reached its peak during World War I. After the war, and especially following the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, it underwent a major transformation from an ideology of imperial ambition into one of frustration and turning away from the West. The Turanian Society declined in influence, split into factions, and lost the support of elites, partly due to internal divisions and the rise of radical and anti-Semitic tendencies. In 1920, radical Turanists founded the *Hungarian Turan Association* to

expand the ideology into a broader social and political program, but it collapsed by 1924, after which its adherents dispersed into smaller organizations. During the 1920s, the term ‘Turanian’ briefly spread in political and public discourse but soon lost prominence. It re-emerged in the 1930s, particularly among right-wing and far-right groups, and the governments of the era selectively adopted certain elements of Turanism, focusing mainly on cultural diplomacy and fostering relations with peoples considered related, especially within the Finno-Ugric sphere. In the second half of the decade, the Hungarian government signed cultural agreements with several such nations, including Finland, Estonia, Bulgaria, and even Japan. During this period, Turanism influenced cultural and social life, appearing in various right-wing organizations and artistic movements that drew on Eastern and Central Asian motifs. This included Hungarian–Japanese, Hungarian–Bulgarian, Hungarian–Turkish, and Hungarian–Finnish associations, which reflected a broad network of perceived cultural kinship. More radical groups envisioned World War II as a “Turanian crusade” and imagined large-scale geopolitical transformations. The most extreme plans even included the future reorganization of Northern Russia into a Finno-Ugric-led “forest empire” extending toward the Urals and the ‘Province of Japan’, which they regarded as a kindred people. These ambitions ultimately failed, especially under German occupation. After 1945, and more clearly after 1957, Turanist ideas survived only in marginal and informal networks, maintained by small circles and a few scholars on the fringes of academic life, continuing into the post-socialist era.[51]

Even before Hungarian Turanism began to take shape as a movement, people wrote about the supposed kinship between Hungarians and Japanese – some seriously, some humorously, which strongly suggests that even at the time the ‘scientific’ value of such polemics was already questionable. Lajos Podhorszky, a Hungarian linguist and corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences who studied Japanese, Chinese, Manchu, and other languages, attempted to explore the origins of the Hungarian language. In 1877, he published an etymological dictionary in which he primarily sought to elucidate Hungarian etymology through Chinese, but he also examined a small number of words in

[51] Ablonczy Balázs: *Kettő között - Szemelvények a két világháború közötti Magyarország művelődéstörténetéből*. ELTE Budapest, 2025., pp. 16-20.

Japanese and Korean.[52] Gábor Bálint Szentkatolnay, a polyglot professor and department head at the *Ferenc József University of Science* in Kolozsvár, who radically rejected the academic mainstream and was therefore not taken seriously by the leading linguists of the era, addressed the question of linguistic kinship in an article published in 1894. At the beginning of the article, he considered it important to emphasize that he had begun dealing with the issue before it became fashionable to write about Japan; in other words, he claimed that his views were not inspired by the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the Japanese victory.

> "*In my university thesis, after listing the habitats of peoples of the same race as us, I mentioned that the easternmost branch of the Turanian (Scythian, Ural-Altaic) language family (the Japanese language) extends as far as the four main islands and several smaller islands (with an area of 382,500 km²) of Japan.*"[53]

According to his own admission, Bálint claimed to have identified more than 800 "Hungarian root words" in the Japanese language. His logic usually proceeds by drawing a chain of superficial resemblances between Japanese and Hungarian, from which further associations are built on a pseudo-linguistic basis.[54] His typical arguments rely on shifting spellings and pronunciations to make the forms appear closer than they are, while overlooking the actual phonology and historical development of Japanese and Hungarian. He cherry-picks elements that look or function similarly. The main issue with Gábor Bálint's 'comparative linguistics' is that it does not demonstrate systematic sound correspondences across core vocabulary or grammar, nor does it show shared irregularities, all of which would be required to establish a genuine genetic relationship. Instead, Bálint's reasoning rests on isolated sound similarities between unrelated languages. In order to justify his quest, he invoked an episode from the 1873 Vienna World Exhibition to support his position, claiming that during the exhibition the Hungarian Academy of Sciences received an inquiry from the Japanese regarding linguistic kinship:

> "*(…) when I later studied L. Rosny's small Nipponian grammar, it became clear to me that the Nipponian language is of the same nature as ours. You*

[52] アルベケル・アンドラーシ「ハンガリー人の日本語発見～幕末から明治末まで～ 4.」In: Monthly Hungary Journal, 2019. July-August, VOL. 194. p. 12.
[53] Bálint Gábor: *Minő fajúak a japánok (nipponiak)?* Erdélyi Múzeum, 1894. XI. kötet, IX. füzet pp. 583-584. Translated by the author
[54] Bálint Gábor: *Minő fajúak a japánok (nipponiak)?* Erdélyi Múzeum, 1894. XI. kötet, IX. füzet p. 584. Translated by the author

can therefore understand my annoyance when, upon returning home from Mongolia, I learned from my late patron, János Fogarasy, that during my absence – perhaps in connection with the Vienna World Exhibition – the Japanese had officially asked the linguistics department of the Hungarian Academy: 'Is it true that the Japanese language is related to the Hungarian language, as many European linguists claim?' and that the two leading Finno-Ugrist scholars of the Academy (…) hastened to answer the question with a resounding 'No'."[55]

The alleged official Japanese inquiry, which seems to have had a firmer existence in imagination than in reality, nevertheless became a hot topic during the first months of 1873. Another article mentions it as well:

"The Japanese government has approached the Hungarian Academy of Sciences with a request to clarify whether there is indeed a linguistic relationship between the Hungarian and Japanese languages, as it has heard. We do not know how the Academy will respond, but we believe that any such kinship is very remote. (...) being satisfied with the kinship of our Finns, Chuvash, Cheremis, and Voguls, we must, alas, likely give up on the highly honorable Japanese nexus."[56]

Closely related to this is the fact that the topic of linguistic kinship appeared twice in the 1873 issues of the satirical magazine *Borsszem Jankó*. In the March issue, the theory was given a page-and-a-half-long mockery, lampooning the unmistakable style of those eager to discover such supposed kinship:

"*The generous donations of Count István Széchenyi led to the creation of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He also wrote Kelet népe* [The People of the East]. *But the Hungarian Academy of Sciences is not only scholarly, it is also grateful. That is why it set out to prove that we are indeed the people of the East. Before, they took us less seriously. Now that we too have national debts, the stock market has taken us in, and so the Hungarian people have become what they were destined to be: a people of the East. Jerney showed that we are most closely related to the yellow melon of Turkestan. Fogarasy made us even more Eastern by proving that we grew on opium trees and that we*

[55] Bálint Gábor: *Minő fajúak a japánok (nipponiak)?* Erdélyi Múzeum, 1894. XI. kötet, IX. füzet pp. 584-585. Translated by the author

[56] Magyar Polgár, 1873-03-12. Translated by the Author.

actually don't speak Hungarian, but Chinese. However, we cannot agree on this as long as there are countries even more Eastern than China. Just as the earth moves from east to west, so the origins of the Hungarians migrate from west to east. This is the astronomy of language. We will prove that the Hungarian-Japanese kinship, about which the Japanese government recently inquired with Count Andrássy, does indeed exist. The languages themselves are so closely related that the Japanese speak Hungarian, so to speak, and we speak Japanese."[57]

The article presents a string of humorous and absurd 'pseudo-similarities' between Hungarian and Japanese. Essentially, it is a parody of linguistic reasoning, showing how far one can stretch coincidences to claim Hungarian-Japanese kinship. The writer mixes real words, coincidental phonetics, and wild interpretations to make the languages seem related in a ridiculous or comical way. It features invented folk etymologies and playful connections based on superficial sound resemblances, such as claiming that "Japan" comes from Hungarian *Apján* ("on its father"), Nagasaki from "*No, gaz a ki (be akar ide jőni)*" (*Well, he is a villain [who wants to enter here]*), Yokohama from *jókor* + *hamar* (rise at the *right time* and finish *quickly*), and linking other Japanese place names or words to archaic Hungarian roots. The article concludes:

"*Hungarians have two ears, and even Japanese people rarely have three. (…) All of this, and especially what we could not include due to lack of space, leaves no doubt about the Hungarian-Japanese kinship, and we hope that Count Andrássy responded in this sense to the Japanese government's question as well.*"[58]

In the August issue, among the speakers at an imaginary international dinner party, a guest representing Japan addresses the assembled guests as follows:

"*Yamasaki: (in Japanese) Japan and Hungary embrace each other. Japan has long respected Hungary, and it is only regrettable that it has known nothing about it until now. The Japanese are related to the Hungarians, their languages stem from the same source, which is why we are unable to understand each other. Yet at the same time, the two nations understand the goal of humanity, and that, gentlemen, is good wine. It would be highly*

[57] *Japán-magyar rokonság*, In: Borsszem Jankó, 1873. március 16., p. 4. Translated by the Author.
[58] *Japán-magyar rokonság*, In: Borsszem Jankó, 1873. március 16., p. 4. Translated by the Author.

desirable if such wines were also produced in Japan; then we would not be forced to seek solace in opium. Long live Hungarian wine and Hungarian friendship!"[59]

The fact that the satirical magazine addressed the topic twice in 1873 suggests that the urban legend about the Japanese was quite popular. So much so that it resurfaced again in 1902 – this time not in a satirical newspaper, but in a publication of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences – attributing the revival of the subject to Kurakichi Shiratori on the occasion of preparations for a possible visit by a Japanese dignitary:

"*It has been nearly fifty years since the Viennese linguist Boller (1857) demonstrated that the Japanese language also belongs to the Ural-Altaic family. His word comparisons did not prove much. In 1858, he stated in person that when compiling these comparisons, he had based them solely on sound, and by then he himself no longer attached much importance to them. Hungarian linguistics at the time also paid them little attention, so it is no wonder that many were surprised by the mention of the Hungarian-Japanese kinship during the upcoming visit of the Japanese Crown Prince,[60] as well as in the statements of Dr. Shiratori, a Japanese poet who is striving to learn the related Hungarian language in the cities of the Great Plain.*"[61]

Western linguists' theories were also discussed in Hungarian academic papers. One example dates from 1894, when debates surrounding the theory of the "Japanese as a Ural-Altaic people" were addressed and Henrik Winkler's latest work was introduced. Winkler had by then already published numerous studies on Ural-Altaic languages, in which he had included Japanese among the Ural-Altaic languages from his earliest work onward. Since then, he had become increasingly convinced of this linguistic kinship, and in 1894 he was preparing a comprehensive study for the Berlin Academy in which he intended to demonstrate the relationship between Japanese and Ural-Altaic languages through comparisons of vocabulary as well as phonological, morphological, and syntactic structures. The Hungarian paper informed readers that Winkler had only published a short booklet in which he briefly

[59] *Nemzetközi Lakmározások*, In: Borsszem Jankó, 1873. augusztus 3. p. 4. Translated by the author
[60] The reason for the reference in the text to the Japanese Crown Prince remains unclear, as no such person visited Hungary in or around 1902 (between July 19 and 21, former Prime Minister Count Masayoshi Matsukata spent two days in Budapest).
[61] Szilárdy Áron: *Szónyomozás*. In: Akadémiai értesítő XIII. kötet, 10. Füzet, p. 504. The reason for the reference in the text to the Japanese Crown Prince is unknown, since no such person visited Hungary in or around 1902.

summarized his evidence: *Japaner und Altaier* (Berlin: Dümmler, 1894). In this work, he compared Japanese with Hungarians, writing: "*I have seen women's faces that remind me of the noblest Hungarian faces*".[62]

(Japan – Korea – China) Reise-Erinnerungen 1903. Photo Album of Ferenc Hopp's travel to the Far-East (private collection)

Beyond linguists, references to Hungarian-Japanese kinship appear in the writings of Hungarian travelers and certain public figures. Attila Szemere, who visited Japan in 1883, wrote in his unpublished travelogue: "*There is a kinship between us*

[62] Nyelvtudományi közlemények 24. kötet, 1894., p. 286. Translated by the Author.

and the inhabitants of Dai-Nippon in that our origins are shrouded in mystery…".[63] Szemere wrote the following lines about turning towards the East in the mid-1880s:

> "*Looking at our nation's past, we look to the East - searching for its future, we find it in the East. Ever since the slogan 'To the East, Hungarians!', which is only a supplement to 'To the sea, Hungarians!', everyone acknowledges that this laconic phrase best characterizes the essence of the nation's calling, and everyone – or at least the vast majority – is content to take note of the phrase and file it away in the junk drawer of grand axioms in which we are, sadly, so rich.*"[64]

In 1891, János Vadona met a Japanese man on a ship bound for Japan and mentioned the question of kinship: "*When one of my Japanese traveling companions unexpectedly addressed me, I told him that we are also an Asian race, which surprised him very pleasantly*".[65] In 1898, the ship's doctor Lajos Fanzler wrote in his travel diary: "*Here I finally found myself among the most cultured people of the Far East, our relatives with their pure black hair, yellowish skin, and strongly protruding cheekbones*".[66]

The Hungarian poet Endre Ady also dealt with the Japanese in some of his works. Ady followed Japan's modernization with keen interest in the early 1900s, especially during the Russo-Japanese war. He undoubtedly felt sympathy for the Japanese; he wrote about them in several articles and commentaries.[67] In his article entitled *Magyarul is tudnak (They Know Hungarian Too)*, published on March 2, 1905, in *Budapesti Napló*, he wrote the following:

> "*They know everything. They even know Hungarian. And a few years ago, all we knew about them was 'Yokohama, Nagasaki, Hakodate, hey'. A Hungarian man who emigrated from Komárom to the land of chrysanthemums dies in Yokohama. The Japanese officials write a letter to Komárom – in Hungarian.*

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[63] Szemere Attila: *Japán útirajzok II.* HOM HTD 73.503.42 Translated by the Author.
[64] Szemere Attila: *Japán-Törökország* HOM HTD 73.503.42. Translated by the Author. "*To the sea, Hungarians!*" refers to a 19th-century Hungarian political slogan urging the landlocked country to gain access to the sea (primarily through the Adriatic port of Fiume/Rijeka). It symbolized economic independence, modernization, and great-power ambition. "*To the East, Hungarians!*" builds on a long-standing Hungarian idea of Eastern (Asian/steppe) origins. It expresses the belief that Hungary's historical roots – and possibly its future alliances or inspiration – lie in the East rather than in Western Europe.
[65] Vadona János: *Az öt világrészből*. Budapest, 1893. pp. 525-526. Translated by the author
[66] Fanzler Lajos: *Thurzófüredről – Japánba. Egy hajóorvos naplójából*. In: Orvosi Hetilap, 1898. 18. sz. p. 215. Translated by the Author.
[67] *A japánok*, 1900. szept. 5. Szabadság; *Beöthy japánjai*, 1902. márc. 8., Nagyváradi Napló; *A japánok képvásárlása*, 1904. júl. 25., Budapesti Hírlap; *Egy magyar szabadságharcos és a japán vezérek*, 1904. szept. 11., Budapesti Hírlap, etc… http://www.intratext.com/IXT/HUN0028/ (accessed: 2026 March)

Even if this news is refuted, it doesn't matter. It is certain that the little Muscovite-catchers know Hungarian when they need to. After all, they have already written in Hungarian a few times. In any case, it is certain that these distant people know us. French newspapers write that their prisons are based on the Hungarian system. Now they are going to model their tobacco factories on the Hungarian system. (...) We cannot be a completely useless nation if these practical little miracle people care about us. And this is worth talking about – but only sadly. Ever since they started making history, we have been greatly inclined to claim kinship with the little Japanese. Many of us cheerfully believe that we are just such an excellent people. One day we will have our say. However, this opinion is merely a figment of Hungarian nationalism. Of course, of course, we simply admire the fact that they beat the Russians. This impresses the entire glorious cultural world today. (...) I wish the Hungarian nationalists were right. I wish we were related to them. But we are not. They even know Hungarian. They know everything. They can deal with the whole world. We, on the other hand, knew little, and even that little we knew poorly. We have a strange, bizarre – though not entirely impossible – idea that we have been nursing for a few weeks. Our great and wealthy Hungarian gentlemen should establish a total of fifteen scholarships for young Hungarians. These scholarship holders should spend a year abroad, in Japan. Perhaps the Hun connection is true. Perhaps there, in the Far East, we could learn more easily from our relatives everything that we should have learned here in the West but could not."[68]

In his short essay titled *Ázsia diákjai (The Students of Asia)* Ady reports on an imaginary congress: students from a wide range of Asian countries declare that a new era in history has dawned and that, after four thousand years, Asia will once again lead humanity.

"*In an instant, the roles were assigned. The Japanese are the new Athenians. China is the new Roman Empire. The Hindus will be the new English of the world. Every Asian nation was assigned a European role at the student assembly. The Ainu students, however, became very angry. They were told*

[68] Budapesti Napló, 1905. március 2. Translated by the Author.

that they would be the Hungarians of Asia. Disheartened, they left the congress."[69]

As a thinker receptive to the East, Ady never lost sight of the cultural and geopolitical situation of the Hungarian people; he constantly sought parallels and affinities with the East, sometimes with skepticism, sometimes with pride, and sometimes with irony. What comes through in his writing is less a desire for exoticism than a need for deeper personal and national self-knowledge. In this regard, perhaps the sharpest tone is struck in his tirade titled *Menjünk vissza Ázsiába (Let's Go Back to Asia)*:

"*The cultured nations are watching us. They see our inability to progress; they see that we sprawl about with Samoyedic morals, making a nuisance of ourselves in the middle of Europe.*"[70]

We also encounter this idea in Ady's poetry from 1912: "*And the Nippon superstition took hold, and our pride was fueled by our kinship with Japan.*"[71]

Photograph from Rakovszky's 1901 photo collection (Hansági Múzeum)

[69] Ady Endre: *Az én hadseregem*. Budapest, Kozmosz, 1977, p. 75. Translated by the Author.
[70] Ady Endre Publicisztikai írásai, I. 210., 1977. Translated by the Author.
[71] Ady Endre: Margita Párisba jött

Among the many ideas concerning the alleged links between Hungarians and Japanese, one less prominent connection between the Turanian concept and Japanese art emerged in relation to an exhibition in 1907. Ernő Kammerer, director of the Museum of Fine Arts, wrote the following:

> "*And let it be, after a long time, the first link to the Mongol-Turanian culture, which developed with dignified calm and possessed such great assimilative power, with which the Hungarians shared common interests in their ancestral homeland for immeasurable time, and one of whose emanations is Japanese art.*"[72]

On the Japanese side, long before the political Turanist movement began, the term "Turan" had already appeared, and multiple Japanese commentators used it in different contexts and with varying meanings.[73] In one source from 1883, the word "Turanian" (チュラーニアン) was used to describe a language group or family.[74] In 1898, Chōgyū Takayama, a highly influential Japanese philosopher, literary critic, and essayist of the Meiji period, discussed the Turanian race (ツラン人種), stating that Japan was its last stronghold. Takayama interpreted world affairs as a racial confrontation between the Aryans and the Turanians. He imbued the concept with the meaning of a civilizational force, portraying it as destined to confront the Aryans in world history. In one of his texts, the Turanians are linked to the Magyar people:

> "*From the third to the ninth centuries, a new wave of migrations by the Turanian race began, and the vanguard of this movement was the Huns (Xiongnu), a people who had once invaded the Chinese Empire – a fellow Turanian civilization – only to be repelled. Among the Turanian peoples, following the Huns, the groups that caused the greatest suffering to the Aryan peoples were the Avars and the Magyars. The latter, in particular, appeared across the central plains of Europe – from France in the west to Constantinople in the east – for roughly a century beginning at the end of the ninth century, and eventually established the Kingdom of Hungary.*"[75]

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[72] *Gróf Vay Péter-féle Japán gyűjtemény*. Budapest, Hornyánszky, 1908. Előszó.

[73] 中井健太「トゥラン主義運動以前のトゥラン言説：フリードリヒ・マックス・ミュラー説と明治日本」In: EX ORIENTE. 2024, 28, pp. 138., 143, 146-147. Max Müller's work was not translated into Japanese until 1907.

[74] 『百科全書』:『言語篇』, 文部省, 1883.

[75] 高山樗牛「人種競争として見たる極東問題」姉崎潮風ほか編『樗牛全集5』日本図書センター, 東京, 1898, pp. 339-353. Translated by the author.

Around 1900, Kazutami Ukita, a prominent Japanese historian, political scientist, and educator, wrote an introductory book on ancient Western history. The work, based on his lecture notes at Tokyo College, went through multiple editions at the turn of the century. In his account, the Turanian race, associated with “Turanian languages”, was placed at the lowest stage of civilization, whereas the Aryan race, associated with “Aryan languages”, was considered the most developed. Ukita argued that the Turanian race undertook the most difficult early stages of civilization, and that the existence of the highly developed Aryan race was due in part to the efforts of their predecessors. In other words, he claimed that the global hegemony of the Aryan race was not built by them alone. In Ukita’s text, the Turanians are discussed both as a linguistic group and as a race that accomplished the significant task of laying the foundations of world history; this can be seen as a discourse that tempers Aryan supremacy.[76] He explained Turanian languages as follows:

> “*The term ‘Turanian’ is somewhat vague in meaning and encompasses languages in Asia and Europe that do not belong to the major groups of Semitic, Aryan, or Sino-Tibetan languages. The languages of the Magyars of Hungary, the Finns, the Lapps, the Ossetians, the Turks, the Tatars, and the Mongols all fall into this category.*”[77]

Although it is not widely known, there was a Japanese–Hungarian duo who personally advocated Turanism in Japan as early as the spring of 1914. The Hungarian member of this duo was the self-proclaimed anthropologist Benedek Balogh Barátosi, while the Japanese member was Jūichirō Imaoka (今岡十一郎). Barátosi had collaborated with Professor Kotarō Yamaguchi 山口小太郎, director of the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages from 1903, on a project to compile a dictionary of Turanian languages. When Barátosi planned his 1914 expedition, Yamaguchi advised him to take a companion and recommended one of his recent graduates, Jūichirō Imaoka. Seeing this as beneficial for both practical assistance and Imaoka’s experience with Europeans, Barátosi hired him, covering his expenses and providing a salary.[78] Barátosi and Imaoka relied on each other during their research trip, for

[76] 中井健太「トゥラン主義運動以前のトゥラン言説：フリードリヒ・マックス・ミュラー説と明治日本」In: EX ORIENTE. 2024, 28, pp. 147., 149.
[77] 浮田和民『西洋上古史』東京専門学校, 東京 (early 1900), pp. 16-18. Translated by the author.
[78] Baráthosi Balogh Benedek: *Japán, a felkelő nap országa. Baráthosi Turáni Könyvei.* Szerzői kiadás, Budapest, 1930., pp. 13-14.; Barátosi’s third visit to Japan, which took place in spring 1921, was financed by the then Prime Minister Teleki, a strong supporter of Turanism and admirer of Japan, who believed Hungary could recover from postwar poverty and instability by aligning with Japan and promoting the Turan movement. To support this goal, he personally funded Barátosi’s trip to Japan, officially framing it as a mission to recover

which Barátosi had received support from the Hungarian ministry. He had committed himself to an expedition aimed at collecting ethnographic material and linguistic data on the peoples of the Arctic Circle and neighboring regions, as well as verifying existing records. As part of this plan, he was to travel first to Japan to study the Ainu and, in addition to assembling an ethnographic collection, to acquire sufficient linguistic material to enable the study of the Ainu dialects in a Hungarian museum.[79] At the same time, as a kind of "side project" driven by Barátosi's personal ideological goals, they organized public events and co-authored texts to promote Turanist ideology in Japan. Despite this, their relationship had turned bitter by the early 1930s. After the First World War, Imaoka lived in Hungary between 1922 and 1931. In 1922, Baráthosi helped him travel to Hungary to continue his studies. Imaoka gave presentations and wrote creative non-fiction, as well as more than 150 articles on Japan and the Japanese people in Hungarian. These writings were later compiled into his book *Új Nippon* (*New Nippon*, 1929), which attracted considerable interest in the Hungarian literary market. During his stay, he actively participated in cultural life and maintained connections with the Hungarian political elite of the 1920s. After leaving Hungary in 1931, he became a kind of spokesperson for Hungary in Japan: he published articles about Hungary and compiled the first Japanese–Hungarian dictionary. Although they were probably never close friends – due to clear signs of Imaoka's lack of integrity[80] during their 1914 collaboration – their working relationship

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goods from a warehouse in Yokohama. 今岡十一郎「ハンガリー滞在十年」[12月10日号の第一連載] In:『日本週報』390., 1956. p. 31.

[79] Baráthosi Balogh Benedek: *Japán, a felkelő nap országa. Baráthosi Turáni Könyvei.* Szerzői kiadás, Budapest, 1930., pp. 12-13.

[80] Imaoka repeatedly challenged and disrespected his Hungarian employer during their trip. He refused to translate or engage in negotiations, consistently sided with other Japanese, made threats, and otherwise acted contrary to Barátosi's instructions, forcing confrontations and creating stress. On one occasion, while Barátosi was exhausted and resting, the Japanese student lured his 16-year-old son into inappropriate situations, using money that Barátosi had left for incidental expenses. It is interesting that Barátosi ultimately did not dismiss the Japanese student from his service, despite ample examples of repeated breaches of trust, disrespect, and manipulative behavior on Imaoka's part. They continued working together from 1921, when Barátosi visited Japan again. Barátosi believed that Japan, as the strongest independent "Turanian" nation, could lead oppressed Turanian peoples against Soviet Russia. In Japan, Barátosi worked closely with the Russian émigré Alimcan Tagan and Imaoka, who had turned away from socialism and embraced Turanism. Together, they founded Japan's first Turanist organization, the "Greater Asia Association–Turan Alliance" (大亜細亜協会・ツラン同盟会) and sought support from Japanese Asianists, the military, and politicians. Yet, their movement remained marginal: Japanese interest in Turanism was limited, largely superficial, and motivated mainly by anti-Russian sentiment. By 1922, Barátosi and Imaoka left Japan, traveled through the United States to raise funds among Hungarian communities, and then went to Hungary with Tagan. Yet their broader dream of creating a powerful Turanian movement linking Japan, Central Asia, and Hungary never materialized. See: Baráthosi Balogh Benedek: *Japán, a felkelő nap országa.* Baráthosi Turáni Könyvei. Szerzői kiadás, Budapest, 1930., pp. 18., 38-43.; 今岡十一郎「ハンガリー滞在十年」[12月10日号の第一連載 1//3] In:『日本週報』390./393 1956. pp. 30-35. / pp. 55-59.

remained relatively stable at that time. However, it later deteriorated into a personal feud, particularly after Imaoka moved to Hungary and became active in public life. Jealousy likely played a significant role in Baráthosi's public accusations against Imaoka shortly before his departure from Hungary. (Alternatively, these accusations may have contributed to Imaoka's decision to leave, though this episode requires further investigation.)[81] In January 1931, the Hungarian weekly *Reggeli Újság* published a hostile and offensive article about Imaoka. Drawing largely on claims by Baráthosi, it accused him of dishonesty, immorality, and opportunism, employing racist and stereotypical language to undermine his personal and professional credibility. The article alleged that Imaoka falsely presented himself as an official representative, "feigned support for Turanism for personal gain", and improperly used the title of professor. It also accused him of plagiarism, inadequate Hungarian language skills, and socialist affiliations in Japan – an especially serious charge in interwar Hungary. More broadly, it portrayed him as untrustworthy and exploitative of his Hungarian connections. Imaoka responded by filing a lawsuit in 1931. Although most witnesses testified against him, the court ruled partially in his favor: it recognized his qualifications and authorship of his work. At the same time, it upheld some accusations, including plagiarism and certain personal misconduct. The defendants were fined but only lightly punished, resulting in a limited and ambiguous victory for Imaoka.[82]

Photograph from Rakovszky's 1901 photo collection (Hansági Múzeum)

[81] Tamás Tóth: *Jūichirō Imaoka versus Reggeli Újság: Orientalism in Interwar Hungary*. In: Hallgatói Műhelytanulmányok 3., 2015., p. 109., 111.
[82] Tamás Tóth: *Jūichirō Imaoka versus Reggeli Újság: Orientalism in Interwar Hungary*. In: Hallgatói Műhelytanulmányok 3., 2015., pp. 112-114., 118.

An Enduring Undercurrent: A Never-Ending Trespass Where the Knowable Ends and Wishful Thinking Begins

Taking a significant leap forward in time, we arrive in twenty-first-century Hungary, where discussions of Japanese–Hungarian relations – especially those inhabiting the more imaginative corners of the spectrum – demonstrate that some historical ideas possess an almost impressive ability to refuse retirement. Before venturing into this rather swampy terrain, it is worth keeping a few basic principles in mind. These are as follows:[83]

1. The *relationship between languages* is not the same as the *relationship between peoples*.
2. Language and culture are not merely a legacy, but a source of a people's history. *Neither has anything to do with genes*; in terms of cultural identity, it is foolish to search for genetic roots spanning generations.
3. Identity is a matter of individual choice. *Identity is not a given, especially not something that can be determined genetically*. It is a matter of choosing among states, nations, and groups. Culture plays at least as important a role as language in shaping identity, deciding which elements to adopt, and determining the weight given to them.
4. On the one hand, there is *history* – and on the other, the *history of cultural identity awareness*.
5. There is no such thing as an unchanging identity, only *identities* that overlap to a greater or lesser extent.
6. The classification of Hungarian as a Uralic language, specifically within the Ugric branch, is a well-established *linguistic* fact, and the Eastern component of Hungarian identity awareness is a *cultural* reality.
7. Laypeople's search for kinship is not based on rational thinking, but on a *mix of religious conviction and esotericism*. Essentially, it is a *political* act/dogma, aimed at fabricating support for its theory through spiritual certainty.
8. The notion of Hun and Hungarian–Japanese kinship remains present in public discourse. While they cannot be erased, it is important to note that these

[83] Mostly based on: Sándor Klára: *Nyelvrokonság és hunhagyomány*. Typotex Budapest, 2011.

topics have always been *outside the realm of science* and have been subject to *political polarization*.

9. Experience shows that people are particularly drawn to stories that blend *reality and fiction* – and this tendency accumulates in kinship theories.

Based on the above principles, all inquiries into the Hungarian–Japanese kinship question – or attempts to prove it, especially when shaped by lay interpretations – are entirely meaningless scientifically. Nevertheless, the theory surfaces occasionally, like an underground stream. The only meaningful reason to engage with this topic scientifically is to understand the driving forces and mechanisms behind this unique and complex socio-psychological phenomenon. According to Klára Sándor, there is a discipline that can aid such interpretations: emerging at the intersection of anthropology, cognitive science, and linguistic ideology, it studies "folk linguistics" and investigates how non-specialists perceive language variants. Bringing together perspectives from several fields, we may briefly explore why the question of kinship refuses to disappear and who continues to keep this hidden current flowing today. Klára Sándor argues that opposition to Finno-Ugricism has long served as an identity-forming element for a certain political faction. This influence was particularly strong around 1896, the Hungarian Millennium,[84] which allowed debates over the origins of the Hungarian language and people to become increasingly intertwined with nationalist politics.[85] This tendency eventually crossed into twenty-first-century Hungary, where it continues to offer an irresistible temptation – especially to politicians who hold the purse strings of research funding while possessing only a passing acquaintance with the subject – to appeal to audiences eager for national myths. The academic profession can do little to counter this, because reason and scientific methodology are ineffective against these ideas: they are not about science, but about ideology cloaked in the guise of scholarship. Klára Sándor aptly describes these ideologies as a kind of *national substitute*: a glorious national past in place of a glorious national present. So who are the ones carrying the faintly flickering flame of Hungarian–Japanese kinship? Who are these light-seeking oddballs, these "ancestral/kinship-theory cocaine addicts", these mirage-like, dilettante, amateur,

[84] The Hungarian Millennium was the official celebration of the one-thousandth anniversary of the arrival of the Magyars in the Carpathian Basin (traditionally dated to 896). It was a major state-sponsored event of the Austro-Hungarian period, featuring exhibitions, monuments, and national commemorations designed to showcase Hungary's historical greatness and modern achievements.

[85] Sándor Klára: *Nyelvrokonság és hunhagyomány*. Typotex Budapest, 2011.

pseudo-scientific, alternative people who do not know what they want but long to believe in something, often mixing this with their political affiliations – whom, following Klára Sándor, it would be more appropriate to call “laymen” or “naïve”? There are many of them, and they are diverse: intellectuals who colonize themselves for political reasons, political existentialists, mercenary nationalists, researchers, determined tradition-keepers, esotericists, opportunists living off their Japanese connections, and Japanese propagandists. Others are simply kind and enthusiastic people – the harmless enthusiasts who are dazzled by the possibility of uncovering a long-desired secret or some lost glory, and who may feel like initiated gurus, the keepers of hidden knowledge. One interesting and exciting task for the future could be to sketch the natural history of the above-mentioned oddballs. This would involve examining the archetypes, motivations, and social embeddedness of both the propagators and consumers of Hungarian–Japanese kinship theories – from cultural-historical, anthropological, social-psychological, and cognitive-psychological perspectives – and exploring why certain people are drawn to these theories.

Let us now turn to how the theories of the ‘Japanese branch’ of Turanism have proved remarkably resilient, surviving not only in public discourse but also within certain (fortunately very limited) corners of the Hungarian intelligentsia. There is no doubt that they continue to exist. Only now, the rhetoric is less extreme, and the messages are more cleverly veiled and constructed. Although today’s ‘Japonist Turanism’ has no serious, organized form (for the time being), in one respect we can certainly observe striking parallels with ‘old’ Turanism: its early followers also included highly educated intellectuals and scientists, as is the case with the neo-Turanism seen in 21st-century Hungary, which can be most accurately described as a typically Hungarian, occultist form of neo-Orientalism. The creators of this occult Hungarian neo-Orientalism are researchers with PhDs from certain Hungarian humanities programs, and there are even university professors among them. Since their numbers are negligible and they are not particularly well organized, citing their ideas would be a waste of time; indeed, their names and writings are best left shrouded in benevolent obscurity. It is far more interesting to examine the phenomenon itself and to highlight the characteristics of this trend. The characteristics described in detail below, as explained by Katalin Mund and Márton Attila Farkas in their excellent study on occultism, accurately illustrate the attempt to cloak the Hungarian–Japanese relationship in ‘occult scientific garb’. According to

them, “occultism”, or “modern esotericism”, refers to the largely pseudoscientific and strongly spiritual belief systems that emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as well as to their subcultural manifestations.[86] The study argues that this constitutes a form of religiosity in which “*individuality plays a dominant role, meaning that individuals select their beliefs from the many elements of the ‘religious market’ according to their own needs and desires*”.[87] This is modern occultism, neo-occultism or esotericism: a phenomenon separated from science and culturally marginalized in our society, yet one whose appeal lies precisely in its unique relationship to modern science. As observed by the authors of the study, an important feature of neo-occult trends is their adaptation to the expectations of our age: they assume the guise of a scientific worldview in a form of “scientific mimicry”, functioning as camouflage. Practitioners of this highly modern and effective neo-occultism move with the times, drawing the tools of their disguise from emerging scientific fields and selecting subject matter that is less tangible and objective – therefore more elusive and subjective. Although they initially build on genuine scientific ideas, they eventually extend these ideas toward mystical conclusions, seeking to employ current scientific methods or popular scientific theories to legitimize concepts that no longer truly belong to the realm of science. In essence, they use science to provide ideological support for mysticism. The study offers insight into why neo-occultist ideas frequently appear in connection with Eastern peoples and examines the relationship between Oriental studies and the intelligentsia.[88] The authors argue that the Eastern peoples

> “*still preserve the ancient knowledge, the ancient secrets that we, the 'Hellenes' – that is, the innovative Westerners – once possessed, but have now forgotten. Thus, we are forced to turn to the East, which preserves spiritual treasures (wisdom, secret knowledge, etc.), if we wish to possess them once again. (...) Orientalism, or the ‘idea of the East’ or ‘cult of the East’, became one of the specific cultural expressions of modernity in the modern era (and relatively early on), primarily through its philosophical nature and its psychological aspect, which later became dominant. Orientalism was also*

[86] Mund Katalin , Farkas Attila Márton : *Technicizált spiritualitás, avagy a modern okkultizmus kulturális szemantikája*. In.: Liget, 2002. szeptember (9. szám)
[87] Mund Katalin , Farkas Attila Márton : *Technicizált spiritualitás, avagy a modern okkultizmus kulturális szemantikája*. In.: Liget, 2002. szeptember (9. szám). Translated by the author
[88] Mund Katalin , Farkas Attila Márton : *Technicizált spiritualitás, avagy a modern okkultizmus kulturális szemantikája*. In.: Liget, 2002. szeptember (9. szám) Translated by the author

linked to bourgeois intellectual life, partly because of its scientific aspect (i.e., Eastern studies)."[89]

Photograph from Rakovszky's 1901 photo collection (Hansági Múzeum)

Mund and Farkas contend that there is another interesting aspect to one branch of neo-occultism: mystical racial theory.

"*The third basic type of esoteric scientificity is when occultism attempts to revive and appropriate things that have been rejected by official science. This also includes ideas that have been discarded by science, various former views, hypotheses, rejected ideas, concepts, unfinished or unsuccessful experiments, and old paradigms. As soon as these fall out of the mainstream of science and find themselves on the periphery, they very often encounter esotericism, which takes hold of them. This, of course, imbues them with a certain spiritual content. Although they lose the interest of the scientific community, they are embraced by a much wider audience: subcultures of*

[89] Mund Katalin , Farkas Attila Márton : *Technicizált spiritualitás, avagy a modern okkultizmus kulturális szemantikája*. In.: Liget, 2002. szeptember (9. szám) Translated by the author

interested dilettantes and followers of certain trends in non-Christian new religious movements. (...) It is not just that ideas once popular with the scientific elite seep into popular culture and are revived there, but that they owe their strength precisely to their peripheral nature. Both are marginal, ergo illegitimate. And those on the margins often tend to gravitate towards each other, especially if they also share something in common in terms of content. (...) At the same time, it should be noted that this 'technicized spirituality' does not, of course, consider itself to be a religion or magic, or even occultism or esotericism, but rather a kind of alternative science. Science, that is, legitimate."[90]

What makes this occultist neo-Orientalism "Hungarian"? In Hungary, from the mid-2010s onward, a new front in the cultural war surrounding historical scholarship opened up in the discourse on the ancient past of the Hungarians, driven by an increasingly assertive right-wing ethnogenesis politics. This cultural war over the past thrives in murky waters, as such conditions allow it to shape pseudoscientific ideas according to its own preferences. In the absence of clear and firmly established scientific foundations, this environment is characterized by the arbitrary interpretation and convoluted interweaving of valid partial results from related disciplines – archaeology, linguistics, ethnography, and, more recently, genetics – in a manner congenial to state-driven ethnogenesis politics.[91]

This Japan-related Hungarian occultist neo-Orientalism, as outlined above, is not only interpretable and analyzable within a narrow domestic subculture and public discourse; it also merges into a broader international sphere of influence: the Japanophilism generated and sustained by the trendy "like culture" of the twenty-first century. This like culture produces a contemporary narrative – typically embraced by masses of young people receptive to popular culture – that exists almost exclusively within a positive register. In this process, discourses about Japan become hermetically sealed within an unconditional and generalized "love bubble", characterized by superficial admiration and a system of uncritical preconceptions. Debito Arudou, a naturalized non-Japanese journalist and human rights activist living

[90] Mund Katalin , Farkas Attila Márton : *Technicizált spiritualitás, avagy a modern okkultizmus kulturális szemantikája*. In.: Liget, 2002. szeptember (9. szám) Translated by the author

[91] https://vilag.transindex.ro/?cikk=28546&fbclid=IwAR3iRttUg65wSL29OGpEowwdUJ9yJ5Pn9BGCi68E3QGh_ypped3m7JFI2qg; (accessed: 2026 March)

in Japan, notes in one of his articles that the power of “likes” lies in the fact that a positive attitude is rarely questioned. One does not have to explain why one “likes” something. It hardly needs to be emphasized what kind of damage may be inflicted on public discourse when the simplistic dichotomy of “like/dislike” becomes the standard framework for thinking about a country. At the same time, the preponderance of likes exerts a kind of pressure on the formation of an individual's own opinion, insofar as many people suppress their critical voices and, within the field of force created by the dominance of likes, keep their 'dislikes' to themselves, thereby effectively self-censoring and self-colonizing. It could even be argued that the success of official Japanese nation-branding has created a climate in which non-Japanese observers feel subtle pressure to “love Japan”, a dynamic strengthened by the popularity of like culture. Thus, an unfortunate situation arises where almost every critical voice regarding Japan receives an immediate 'dislike' simply because it falls at the other, undesirable end of the ideological 'like-dislike' bipolar value range. In this way, all those who voice any criticism regarding Japan or the attitude towards Japan can be stigmatized and silenced – that is, those who are *skulking on the wrong side of the dichotomy*.[92] This energy is then channeled into the political narratives of right-wing and far-right ideologies in Hungary, sometimes explicitly and sometimes more implicitly. Consequently, it is difficult not to notice that the pseudoscientific Hungarian–Japanese kinship theories, which display numerous occultist traits, are not far removed from these international trends. Domestic organizations – and the representatives officially tasked with promoting the “love of Japan” in Hungary – are likewise more than willing to ride the wave of these international Japanophile currents.

Let us now venture into the universe of Hungarian occultist neo-Orientalism and examine the kinds of statements that emerge within its self-reinforcing echo chambers. We must set aside the increasingly “mainstreamed” examples of *folk linguistics*, *folk genetics*, or the ever more extravagant claims advanced by prominent figures of certain subcultural *fringe disciplines*. (Nevertheless, let me cite one absolute gem as an extreme example – my all-time favorite: “*Moses had two sons: one Japanese and one Hungarian.*”)[93] Instead, we should turn our attention to three

[92] http://www.debito.org/?p=10842 (accessed: 2026 March)
[93] A lecture by 83-year-old József P. ('Peking') Szabó, former diplomat at the Embassy in Beijing and journalist, held at the Cultural Center in Esztergom in 2014. Source:

archetypal forms of ‘more sophisticated’ statements: **1.** “*It is a well-known fact, and a justifiable source of national pride, that XY is well-known and popular in Japan/China/Korea.*” (In this context, XY is usually a writer or poet central to the prevailing Hungarian literary canon, such as Sándor Petőfi.) **2.** “*In Japanese/Chinese/Korean-Hungarian relations, the Asian origin of Hungarians and the search for kinship with Hungarians are of* ***paramount*** *importance.*” **3.** “*Regarding Japanese/Hun/Korean-Hungarian kinship, we no longer have to wait long for genetic measurements/results and their application in linguistic research.*” The common characteristic of these statements is the excessive overvaluation of the need to express a national ideological or cultural-political position – often mixed with a considerable degree of wishful thinking – while the factual accuracy, truth content, and requirement for scientific verifiability and testing are entirely devalued. This is a harmful attitude, not only because it inevitably leads to erroneous interpretations, but because it disregards the principles and methodology of science. Moreover, it provides a point of reference for dilettantes, enthusiasts, and believers in pseudoscientific doctrines. In other words, individuals who are theoretically educated and professionally trained can become instruments of socio-cultural legitimation for fringe theories, that is, points of reference for folk linguists, folk geneticists, and practitioners of “lunatic disciplines”. In these problematic statements, Asian countries become little more than blank canvases onto which unethical researchers[94] project their subjective, personal, and politically motivated fantasies. Through manipulative interpretation and selective contextualization, the projected image loses its connection to reality. It is also notable that the field of influence surrounding these statements – and the messages covertly implied by the ‘researchers’ – aligns with mainstream political thinking, whose rhetorical traits and elements are often, quite tellingly, embedded within the statements themselves. The simpler the ‘researcher’,

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https://esztergomieletkepek.blog.hu/2014/03/14/magyar-hun_rokonsag_keleten_tavol-kelet_kozelrol_p_szabo_jozsef_eloadasa (accessed: 2026 March)

[94] Gábor Gyáni argues that Hungarian historical practice in the 2020s reflects a policy of pluralization, driven in part by academic historiography’s limited interest in producing narratives tailored to current political agendas. By “pluralization”, he refers to the state’s duplication of the institutional framework for historical research while neglecting the financial support of traditional academic and university institutions. This has created a split in domestic historical discourse: ideologically and politically driven historiography gains ground with abundant support, whereas ethical academic research is confined to a narrow sphere, disconnected from the broader public and the educational system. State-funded research often bends toward government-favored narratives, sometimes encouraging unethical practices, while ethical scholarship struggles to maintain its social relevance. Despite these pressures, academic historiography retains intellectual autonomy and a commitment to rational inquiry, even under conditions of political conformity or marginalization. See: Gyáni Gábor: *Mit ér a szaktudomány, amikor látszólag felesleges?* In: Aetas, 40. évf. 2025. 4. szám. p. 42., 48., 52.

the more explicit this alignment; the more cunning, the subtler. The result is the projection of personal desires and ideological credos, arbitrarily mixed with factual material, ultimately producing a false implication disguised as credible scholarship. In these statements, scientific integrity stumbles over the author's personal and political agendas.

Dezső Bozóky's photo (Hopp Múzeum)

The persistence of these ideas raises a fundamental question: how should we distinguish between legitimate historical and linguistic inquiry and claims that merely adopt the appearance of scholarship? To address this boundary, it is necessary to introduce the concept of pseudoscience. It refers to claims or practices that appear scientific but fail to meet essential scientific standards such as falsifiability, reproducibility, and openness to criticism. Practitioners reject critique, present themselves as scientific, and often tie their ideas to real scientific findings. Pseudoscientific theories are based on uncertain hypotheses that are either unverifiable or coincidentally true, giving the illusion of scientific validity. Their credibility is further reinforced by presenting these ideas as part of a broader, cohesive worldview rather than isolated claims. Other characteristics of pseudoscience include anachronistic thinking, in which claims long refuted by science are still promoted; the search for hidden secrets; and reliance on myths,

where the older a tale, the more persuasive it is considered. It often handles evidence carelessly or selectively, citing data that supports its claims while ignoring contradictory information, and advances hypotheses that are effectively irrefutable. Pseudoscience may create the appearance of legitimacy by using elements of established theories, reinterpreting them, and placing them in new contexts. It also tends to explain phenomena through imaginative scenarios rather than concrete facts, often asserting that facts are merely interpretations, and it generally remains immune to criticism.[95] Many might find it surprising that pseudoscientific beliefs seem to coexist seamlessly within the scientific world. Furthermore, these beliefs do not exist in some alternative vacuum; in certain cases, we are talking about active, publishing researchers who teach in higher education or even work at prestigious research institutes. For many, it remains a mystery what these individuals are doing within academic circles and why the scientific community does not question or criticize their activities more vehemently. This situation persists due to several factors. First, there is the so-called “Nobel disease” (where highly intelligent, acclaimed scientists start believing that because they are a genius in one field, their intuition is infallible in all others). Second, there is the perhaps overly permissive nature of academic freedom, the corruption within peer-review systems, and the impact of predatory journals. Furthermore, professional courtesy – which is hierarchical and avoids personal conflict – plays a role, as does the fact that a serious researcher rarely has the energy to tilt at windmills against a pseudoscientific colleague, especially if that colleague holds a superior position. In many countries, senior academic positions (such as professorships) grant tenure, making the researcher nearly impossible to remove. If someone “loses the plot” or turns toward pseudoscience after their appointment, it is virtually impossible to dismiss them within legal and academic frameworks as long as they do not commit a crime or a grave ethical violation. Prestigious institutions often react slowly to internal problems in order to protect their own prestige. The reality is that it is often more “profitable” to suppress criticism internally or ignore a problematic colleague than to stir up a public scandal that would damage the institution’s reputation and its chances for grants. While science as a method should be self-correcting, science as an institutional system is full of flawed elements. Furthermore, the boundaries between scientific

[95] Veszelszki Ágnes − Falyuna Nóra: *Az áltudományosság leleplezése érveléstechnikai-nyelvészeti eszközökkel*. In: Médiakutató - 20. évf. 3. sz. (2019. ősz). pp. 39-40.

disciplines have become increasingly permeable in recent decades, contributing to the emergence of new interdisciplinary fields. In parallel, a trend can be observed in which some individuals cross the frontiers of related disciplines while completely ignoring the fundamental knowledge, basic concepts, and methodologies of the other field. The elementary prerequisite of interdisciplinarity is adherence to the rules of the sub-disciplines. Proponents of the Hungarian–Japanese kinship theory cross the boundaries of their own competence without the knowledge, application, or control of the basic elements of archaeology, linguistics, ethnography, and history. And why do certain authors cross the boundaries of their own competence? It is undeniable that crossing scientific boundaries sometimes creates a greater sensation and reaches a wider audience than thorough, labor-intensive research projects that remain within the limits of one's expertise. Therefore, a scientist's social 'responsibility' grows with the size of the audience their message reaches. However, a person conducting research on an essentially ideological basis may not even recognize this responsibility due to cognitive dissonance and epistemological blindness. Moreover, the more criticism they receive from those who notice them overstepping their competence, the more they tend to double down on their theories.

At the core of the debates surrounding Hungarian ethnogenesis and ancestral kinship are cultural and mythical narratives that emphasise a direct link between Hungarians and the Huns or the Xiongnu. Gábor Gyáni explains that medieval Europeans often believed in constructed "ancestral peoples", which scribes created from fragments of late-antique historical, geographical, and ethnographic knowledge. These origin myths, though largely disconnected from authentic historical traditions, helped integrate peoples into a divine World Plan while emphasizing their uniqueness and identity within Christendom. Examples range from the French claiming Trojan origins to the Hungarians tracing their descent from the Huns. The Huns, despite being a short-lived and ethnically diverse group, left a lasting impression because, under Attila, they briefly built a vast empire unmatched by later groups like the Hungarians of Árpád. Their raids and empire-building, though fleeting, became legendary, and European memory mythologized the Huns from the 7th and 8th centuries onward. This perception reinforced the Huns as a symbol of anti-Western power, a fear passed down through generations. By the Árpád era (roughly the late 9th century), the Hungarian ruling class was well aware of Attila and the Huns and

may have even admired their Eastern origins and remarkable dominance in Europe.[96] Jumping straight to 21st-century Hungary, there is an undeniable Attila cult, which carries a certain bad aftertaste, since on a global scale, Attila might be the second most reviled historical figure after Hitler. The fact that the Orbán regime has made considerable efforts to connect Attila's historical memory to the Hungarians – thereby emphasizing the politically and ideologically significant Hun–Hungarian connection – creates a weird atmosphere, as if families were competing over whose relative was Jack the Ripper.

Since the early 2000s, advanced archaeogenetic analysis has been used to further validate this 'Hun link', but in reality, there are certain problems with the actual *meaning* of genetic analysis and its *interpretations*, especially when the process of meaning-making occurs in a heavily overpoliticised and ideological environment. There is no shortage of criticism regarding how limited the competence of individual sciences is in examining ethnogenesis. The greatest obstacle is that the study of the Hungarian or Hun people as such is inherently limited in scope, and the explanatory power of individual disciplines is by no means absolute, since 'the Hungarian/Hun people' is itself largely an intellectual construct. Another problem is that language is not ethnospecific (this error stems from the great philosophers of German Romanticism: Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Johann Gottfried von Herder), although in Central and Eastern Europe this approach still determines the thinking of many. Archaeogenetics represents a new, independent group of sources for researching the origins of humanity and the peopling of continents and specific regions, but it is foolish to think that it has provided us with the philosopher's stone for researching ethnogenesis. Research can easily be led astray by an uncritical faith in the biological sciences, which creates the illusion that because the data in such analyses are concrete and based on measurement, it therefore follows that "peoples" possess characteristic – or even distinguishing – biological traits that can be detected objectively. In other words, one might easily think that "people = biological traits" and "measurement = objectivity". Critics see the area of archaeogenetics that deals with ethnogenetic issues and draws historical conclusions regarding modern peoples as problematic, as it often ignores not only their history but also the fundamental research methods of the social sciences. A nearly unanimous criticism of archaeogenetic research is that it neglects the basic principles and evidence of

[96] https://mozgovilag.hu/2021/05/11/gyani-gabor-miert-fontosak-nekunk-a-hunok/ (accessed: 2026 April)

anthropology, linguistics, history, ethnography, and archaeology. At the same time, it must be noted that the databases, methods, and competencies of linguistics, archaeology, and genetics are significantly different. They can offer points of reference to one another, but since their data and results are not of the same nature, they cannot be used directly in one another. In this regard, it is very telling that there is generally no substantive reaction from archaeogeneticists and the archaeologists collaborating with them to the criticisms coming from multiple disciplines. Another criticism is that, essentially due to the above, one can sometimes encounter striking levels of ignorance among archaeogeneticists. Gábor Gyáni, a renowned Hungarian historian, summarized his doubts about the usability of archaeogenetics in six main points: (1) the space- and time-independent cataloging and comparison of haplotypes (group of genetic variants inherited together from one parent) and their subtypes is not a procedure with probative value; (2) archaeogenetics, as used to establish kinship, does not identify ethnic groups; (3) archaeogenetics does not lead to the identification of linguistic communities either; (4) archaeogenetics examines the material from cemeteries, and its purely natural-scientific orientation reveals nothing of the specifically human-historical characteristics of the cemetery source material, since historical genetics always deals with the single, concrete entity: the biological individual itself, with its unique family history stretching back millennia, and without the cultural and social manifestations of its community, organized according to diverse criteria; (5) it is impossible to determine pure genotypes through the study of a cemetery as a purely biological (physical anthropological) collection of artifacts, given that the peoples living together at that time (in contrast to conditions most typical today) exhibited a highly mixed and constantly changing ethnic composition from within; (6) language and the gene pool are not causally related; thus, the gene pool cannot account for language. Therefore, even if genetic methods can confirm that two populations are descendants of a common ancestor who lived tens of thousands of years ago, it would be difficult to say anything about their linguistic origins.[97] Overall, it can be stated with relative certainty that it is essentially an illusion to seek historical connections between today's linguistic conditions and regional genetic characteristics. The possibilities and limitations of archaeogenetics lie precisely in the fact that the ethnogenetic relevance of both recent and archaic genetic samples is minimal and relative. It is also thought-provoking that even the

[97] https://mozgovilag.hu/2021/05/11/gyani-gabor-miert-fontosak-nekunk-a-hunok/ (accessed: 2026 April)

sampling itself is subjective, as the criteria for selection are always based on some kind of scientific construct. The latter can only reflect the current state of knowledge of the research and the individual methodological approach of the researcher; moreover, it may happen that new data could push our knowledge and its scientific assessment in a completely different direction. For all these reasons, the connection of the obtained results to the reality of the past remains uncertain. At the same time, it is also true that archaeogenetics can offer valid "solutions" to one of the main problems of ancient history: the Neolithic peopling of Europe. This path is definitely promising. It is also a methodologically significant achievement when a natural science verifies a phenomenon, theory, or even a hypothesis that had previously been demonstrated only archaeologically or historically. Archaeogenetics can bring novel results in uncovering ethnic processes, but one point must be kept in mind: a genetic fact and its historical evaluation are not categories of the same nature. Just as individual human physical features do not characterize peoples, neither do their genes. Most geneticists – rightly – write about "populations", and they are well aware that these are built from biological components independent of language and culture. The population of a given region – regardless of possible migrations – is mostly mixed with the peoples who have lived there since the most ancient times. An important distinction must be made here: the geneticists' concept of "population" does not correspond to the historians' concept of "people". [98]

Returning to the alleged eastern origin of the Hungarians, research since the early 2000s has shown with considerable certainty that present-day Hungarians are genetically of *European* origin, a *pattern* that is *clearly reflected* in the serological and genetic composition of the modern Hungarian population. At the same time, research in the 2010s and 2020s has produced results indicating that, due to the mixing of peoples, a very small percentage of Asian markers can also be found.[99] The interpretation of this discovery immediately branched in two directions. 'Scholars' driven by national ideology and state-supported research agendas see this as undoubted *proof of Hun–Hungarian kinship*, while researchers who maintain stricter

[98] Bálint Csanád: *A történeti genetika és az eredetkérdés(ek) (A közös kutatás szükségessége és lehetőségei)* In: Magyar Tudomány, 2008/10.

[99] Nevertheless, these results must also be treated with caution, as it is not uncommon for data – often derived from small and highly isolated samples – to be interpreted according to the criteria of a pre-established hypothesis and compared with similarly isolated data from elsewhere across the globe. By such a method, virtually anything – and its opposite – can be "proven". See: Róna-Tas András: *A tudományok határai*. In: Magyar Tudomány 2017/10.

professional standards *avoid such conclusions* and strive to express themselves much more cautiously and precisely.[100] Concerning the Japanese connections of genetic research, Hideo Matsumoto's (松本秀雄) serological studies attracted great interest in Hungarian research and especially among the public in the 1990s, but their historical (or ancient historical) relevance is *highly questionable*.[101] The Japanese serologist, collaborating with a Hungarian researcher at the time, observed 5% Mongoloid elements in samples from Hungary, but the question never even occurred to him as to when these could have entered the modern Hungarian population. (Yet there could have been countless situations for this, from the Hungarian Conquest to the spring of 1945.) Furthermore, he did not examine the frequency of Mongoloid haplotypes among other peoples of the Carpathian Basin, nor among the inhabitants of territories ruled by the Golden Horde for half a millennium (Moldova, Ukraine, and southern Russia). Critics therefore argue that without sufficient comparison this 5% figure cannot be meaningfully evaluated. In addition, the research is affected by sampling anomalies, as well as historiographical and methodological issues. Consequently, the line of research has nearly faded into obscurity, partly because of these criticisms and partly due to the method's clear ethnogenetic limitations.[102] This has had a lasting impact: one enduring legacy of this research is the continued persistence of the view that "*Proponents of Hungarian–Japanese kinship (…) trust in the emergence of genetic arguments*".[103]

The question of *linguistic* kinship is as complex as the debates over supposed genetic kinship, but it opens even more rabbit holes leading into psychology, political science, ideology, and related fields. Of particular interest are attempts to establish

[100] Stricter professional standards are evident in these media appearances: https://www.valaszonline.hu/2025/02/27/hun-kori-karpat-medence-genetika-kutatas-szarmazas-histogenes/; https://www.valaszonline.hu/2026/02/05/ostortenet-ural-hun-magyar-rokonsag-turk-attila-szecsenyi-nagy-anna-podcast/; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KV7Ieu6Pe9w; https://www.valaszonline.hu/2025/01/14/archeogenetika-felfedezes-hun-ren-archeogenomikai-intezet-nepvandorlas-kori-karpat-medence-genetikai-kutatasa-science-advances/ (accessed: 2026 April)

[101] Professor Hideo Matsumoto reported that his laboratory analyzed 1,209 Hungarian samples in collaboration with Budapest's National Institute of Hematology and Blood Transfusion, which organized the blood collection. Further readings: 松本秀雄『日本人は何処から来たか:血液型遺伝子から解く』, NHKブックス, 1992.; Érdy Miklós: *Észrevételek a magyarországi Japán genetikai vizsgálatok kiértékeléséhez*. In: Csihák György (szerk.): A Zürichi Magyar Történelmi Egyesület VI. Magyar Magyar Őstörténeti Találkozó előadásai. - Szent Gallen 1991. pp. 64-77.

[102] Matsumoto Hideo: *Characteristics of Mongoloid and neighboring populations based on the genetic markers of human immuno globulins*. In: A Zürichi Magyar Történelmi Egyesület Hatodik Magyar Őstörténeti Találkozó előadásai és iratai. Szent Gallen, 1991, pp. 24-39.; Bálint Csanád: *A történeti genetika és az eredetkérdés(ek) (A közös kutatás szükségessége és lehetőségei)* In: Magyar Tudomány, 2008/10; Róna-Tas András (1990): *Megjegyzések a legújabb genetikai vizsgálatok történeti felhasználhatóságáról.* Magyar Tudomány. 8. pp. 918–924.

[103] Tauszik Tamás: *Genetikai vizsgálatok és a magyarság történelme*. Magyar Tudomány. 8, 1990., pp. 904–918.

kinship between peoples on the basis of language, or linguistic kinship on the basis of human genetics – an effort roughly equivalent to trying to cross a horse with a fly. Efforts to link Hungarian with other languages – like Japanese – stem from the fact that Hungarian is linguistically isolated and doesn't resemble nearby Slavic or Germanic languages. This led to many speculative and often pseudo-scientific theories attempting to connect Hungarians to various ancient or prestigious peoples (such as Sumerians, Egyptians, Etruscans, Huns, and Celts), while notably ignoring less 'glamorous' groups. (No one has attempted to prove a kinship between Hungarians and the *Roma* or between Hungarians and *Albanians*, as linguist László Honti highlights as a significant characteristic.) Over time, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, 'researchers' and enthusiasts proposed hundreds of supposed linguistic relatives worldwide, often driven more by imagination or cultural bias than solid evidence.[104] Such theories persist because they provide simple, appealing answers where science is still inconclusive. László Honti, a renowned Hungarian linguist argues that romantic origin stories – like the belief in Hun-Hungarian kinship – are more exciting and accessible than rigorous scholarly explanations. He also notes that these ideas are fueled by historical misconceptions and a sense of inferiority: in medieval Europe, incoming eastern tribes were often labeled as Huns, which helped justify Hungarian settlement in the region. This led to enduring myths, such as the Árpád dynasty claiming descent from Attila to legitimize their rule. Although linguists usually avoid engaging with amateur theories, László Honti addressed them and warned that, after the fall of communism, such ideas spread rapidly alongside greater freedom of expression. These alternative linguistic theories often carry political and conspiratorial elements, portraying academic scholars as aligned with past regimes or foreign interests, while framing amateur theorists as patriotic defenders of Hungarian identity. As a result, mainstream scholarship is sometimes depicted as an attempt to undermine national pride and history.[105] The Finno-Ugric origins of Hungarian often spark public debate because some amateur linguists reject mainstream findings and promote alternative linguistic theories to 'restore' what they see as a falsified national history. Driven by nationalism and conspiracy thinking, these views portray Hungarians as a special, chosen people and aim to create a

[104] Honti László: *Anyanyelvünk atyafiságáról, és a nyelvrokonság ismérvéről - Tények és vágyak*. Tinta Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 2012. pp. 9-10.
[105] Honti László: *Anyanyelvünk atyafiságáról, és a nyelvrokonság ismérvéről* - Tények és vágyak. Tinta Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 2012. p. 15., 55., 62., 66.

glorified national self-image. An “ancient Hungarian subculture” has emerged around these ideas, complete with institutions, publishers, books in bookstores and libraries, public lectures, and extensive online content. The amount of material circulating on the internet is vast. Nevertheless, this phenomenon is not unique to Hungary; similar theories exist elsewhere, such as the Croats’ Persian origin theory, the Poles’ Sarmatian origin theory, and the Albanians’ Illyrian origin theory.[106]

Dezső Bozóky’s photo (Hopp Múzeum)

By the late 19th century, the Finno-Ugric theory had become the dominant framework in Hungary, particularly among linguists, and even Hungarian expeditions to the East were partly driven by a desire to explore and support alternative theories. These ideas were influenced by Max Müller, who in the mid-19th century proposed a broad “Turanian” language group distinct from Aryan and Semitic languages and associated it with nomadic peoples. Although his theory gained significant attention and recognition, including in Hungary, it was soon challenged and eventually outdated by

[106] Imreh Réka: *A laikus nyelvrokonítási kísérletekkel kapcsolatos oktatásmódszertani kérdések*. Anyanyelv-pedagógia (Online). DOI: 10.21030/anyp.2017.3.2, https://www.anyanyelv-pedagogia.hu/cikkek.php?id=691 (accessed: 2026 March)

advances in comparative linguistics. By the end of the century, the concept of “Turanian” had largely been replaced by the term “Ural-Altaic”, while still allowing some overlap with Finno-Ugric linguistic relationships. Building on earlier research and using the emerging methods of historical comparative linguistics, József Budenz and Pál Hunfalvy proved the Finno-Ugric origin, which quickly gained international recognition in the 19th century. This so-called “Ugric-Turkic War” was a major scholarly debate about Hungarian origins that reflected broader tensions between romantic nationalism and positivist science. On one side were *Orientalists* like Ármin Vámbéry, and on the other were *Finno-Ugric linguists* such as Budenz and Hunfalvy. Vámbéry originally believed Hungarians were mainly Finno-Ugric with later Turkic influences, only later shifting toward emphasizing Turkic connections. At the same time, Budenz and Hunfalvy were not always firmly committed to Finno-Ugric theories either. Because the popular Ural-Altaic theory allowed for overlap between these groups, positions often shifted. Rather than producing a clear winner, the debate helped scholars better understand Hungarian linguistic and ethnic history. Vámbéry approached the issue through ethnography and romantic ideas, while Budenz and Hunfalvy relied on comparative linguistics and positivist methods. In the end, comparative linguistic methods became dominant, while the romantic approach gradually faded.[107] Budenz and Hunfalvy, both of non-Hungarian origin, were often viewed by their contemporaries as representatives of foreign, anti-national (Habsburg) interests. Despite the scientific consensus, some lay authors and amateur linguists continued to promote 19th-century *word-root theories*, claiming Hungarian as one of the world’s proto-languages and rewriting Hungarian prehistory in the process. Many rejected the Finno-Ugric kinship because they believed it was imposed for non-scientific, politically motivated reasons – blaming the Habsburgs (or later, Soviets) for allegedly weakening Hungarian national pride. They overlooked the fact that Finno-Ugric studies were conducted internationally and supported by unrelated disciplines like Germanic studies and Turkology. These alternative approaches often ignore the methodology of linguistics. Lay researchers focus on the origin of words, making connections based on *coincidental phonetic similarities* without considering historical change, grammatical systems, or systematic data collection. They may compare modern Hungarian words – or even words from the

[107] László Károly: *A magyar-török nyelv(v)iszony kutatásának vázlatos természetrajza*. Manuscript. 2020., pp. 4-5.

language reform era – with ancient languages, relying on *intuition* rather than scientific proof. Scientific conclusions, however, require historical-comparative methods, logical confirmation, and rigorous evidence. Réka Imreh highlights that lay theories of Hungarian linguistic kinship persist not because of internal consistency, but because their proponents reject the scientific consensus outright. It is not important to them whether Hungarians are claimed to descend from Sumerians, Huns, or Egyptians – the key is that they are not “Finno-Ugrians”. Rather than refuting scientific findings in detail, these authors rely on a conspiracy framework that dismisses the entire scientific community. While linguists typically address these claims from a refuting perspective, the phenomenon is better understood as a social and cultural issue. Causes lie both in the authors themselves and in the audience. Some émigré authors, isolated from their homeland, may seek a glorious national past as a form of nostalgia or unresolved mourning. Among the audience, long-standing cultural narratives reinforce receptiveness to such theories from childhood onward. Psychological factors, such as valuing one’s own culture and language, uncertainties about self-image, and a desire to appear knowledgeable, also contribute. Additionally, skepticism toward the humanities and social sciences – viewed as less practical or socially useful compared with natural or technical sciences – makes pseudoscientific claims more attractive. This skepticism, partly rooted in the legacy of the communist era but also observable worldwide, encourages laypeople to embrace simplified explanations and apparent insights that seem to provide easy understanding of complex historical and linguistic issues. Hungary’s history of *national trauma* – from the 1849 defeat, the Treaty of Trianon, through the socialist era – has created a collective sense of frustration and a “victim role” in national consciousness. Key historical losses and failed independence struggles, reinforced attachment to a glorified past while pushing self-critical reflection to the background. Trianon, considered Hungary’s “*chosen trauma*”, remains largely unprocessed, intensifying the appeal of heroic narratives and the demonization of traumatic events like the Habsburgs, socialism, or Trianon itself. This attachment is compounded by Hungary’s linguistic isolation, which fosters beliefs that Hungarian is unique or superior, and by a cultural susceptibility to conspiracy theories and anti-academic sentiment. Such pseudoscientific or conspiratorial narratives provide simple, emotionally satisfying explanations for complex historical and linguistic questions, offering clear divisions between “good” and “evil”. Their

simplicity, emotional resonance, and shareability make them more appealing than nuanced scientific explanations, contributing to the persistence of non-scientific theories in Hungarian society.[108] Furthermore, it's impossible to ignore political and ideological factors. Any significant conspiracy theory carries political intent – often exploited by political actors – and Hungary is no exception. When such conspiratorial, paranoid ideas enter politics, they target not just individuals, but entire nations, cultures, and ways of life, affecting millions. In the 19th century, the rise of Romanticism, nationalism, and a growing educated bourgeois class fueled wildly imaginative and often primitive etymological theories about Hungarian origins. Intellectual freedom encouraged both genuine scholarship and the proliferation of speculative, uncompromising views on kinship, a tone that persists among contemporary dilettantes. The movement gained further momentum after the Treaty of Trianon, when nationalist sentiment intensified and intellectual theories about Hungarian origins became intertwined with far-right politics. Its peak came under the Arrow Cross regime during World War II, when notions like a shared Japanese-Hungarian ancestry were promoted as official policy. After the communist takeover and the 1956 Revolution, extreme cultural ideologies persisted, particularly among émigrés, who associated them with resistance to oppression and opposition to mainstream scholarship. Following the regime change in 1989, the liberalization of publishing and the flourishing of intellectual life led to a resurgence of amateur theories in linguistics and other fields. These views have persisted across generations, often shaped more by personal and political convictions than scientific evidence.[109] It cannot be stressed enough that the fall of socialism was significant for the major reshaping of historical narratives in Hungary. As previously silenced voices and personal "micro-perspectives" gained prominence, unified, large-scale historical interpretations became harder to sustain, pushing broader historical connections into the background. This fragmentation, combined with the exclusion of certain groups under socialism, led to efforts to reconstruct history from the remaining fragments, driven by political, moral, and scholarly motivations. This reconstruction is not neutral but selective, emphasizing elements of the past that align with present political and

[108] Imreh Réka: *A laikus nyelvrokonítási kísérletekkel kapcsolatos oktatásmódszertani kérdések*. Anyanyelv-pedagógia (Online). DOI: 10.21030/anyp.2017.3.2, https://www.anyanyelv-pedagogia.hu/cikkek.php?id=691 (accessed: 2026 March)
[109] Bánhalmi József: *Az alternatív nyelvrokonítási kísérletek újabb megközelítései*. Phd. Debreceni Egyetem, 2008. pp. 15-16.

ideological goals. As a result, the interwar period is often idealized and treated as a model, while the process of rebuilding history moves from rejecting old myths to creating new ones. These newly constructed narratives are then embedded within national frameworks, producing origin myths that legitimize post-socialist society. In this context, a sharp contrast emerges between a supposedly “true” national history – seen as continuous and suppressed under socialism – and a “false” socialist history, viewed as artificial and discontinuous. This often involves nostalgic visions of a powerful past, used to justify the nation’s present and future. Ultimately, the rise of such nationalist narratives in Hungary is closely linked to reactions against communist oppression and to a persistent sense of perceived threats to the nation.[110]

Sitting stool by Júlia Zsolnay, 1896 – Featuring a waterfall, plants, and butterflies (Iparművészeti Múzeum)

Returning to linguistics and history – which, unlike genetics, invites opinions from virtually anyone – it is telling to consider the remarkably diverse professional backgrounds of those who nowadays pronounce on the question of Hungarian–Japanese kinship in Hungary. Among them, we find gastronomes, linguists, publicists, raku artists, engineers, futurologists, diplomats, physicians, cosmochemists, lawyers, economists, politicians, Japanologists, television presenters, secondary-school biology and geography teachers, martial artists, foreign policy experts, major generals, dance instructors, and composers, all confidently venturing into a field far removed from their own. Readers interested in the dazzling collection of these self-appointed ‘experts’ and their beautifully amorphous ideas are

[110] Szilárdi Réka: *Feltalált hagyomány – használható múlt. A nyelvtörténet és eredetmítosz polemikus reprezentációi.* In: Bakró-Nagy Marianne: Okok és okozat. A magyar nyelv eredetéről történeti, szociálpszichológiai és filozófiai megközelítésben. Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 2018. pp. 126-132.

referred to one of the present author's books published in Hungarian.[111] According to the Hungarian linguist László Honti, alternative 'researchers' who flout scientific methods (that is, "*members of a highly heterogeneous consortium of intellectual alchemists who fabricate false gold*"[112]) can be classified into three groups in Hungary: (1) absolute amateur linguists, including some with university degrees, as well as fanatics who have never even come close to higher education; (2) academic instructors and researchers trained in archaeology and history, who may be successful in their own fields but lack sufficient knowledge of historical-comparative linguistics and, at best, act as quacks in the discipline of linguistics; (3) linguists who studied linguistics but have strayed into the realm of fantasy, lack sufficient knowledge of historical or comparative linguistics, or make grandiose claims out of a desire for attention. A common characteristic of all three groups is that they either do not disclose their alleged sources or do not reveal what is actually written in them.[113] In *Strange Linguistics* (2013), Mark Newbrook introduces the concept of the "*maverick linguist*", describing scholars who, while fully qualified and professionally trained, consciously distance themselves from mainstream academic conventions. These linguists are not charlatans or laypeople, but often produce controversial or alternative work that falls outside accepted norms. For some, this occurs late in their careers, earning the nickname "delirium emeriti" though other factors may also contribute. Non-mainstream studies – such as those on the origins of national languages or alternative national histories – are often written in the national language for internal audiences and, lacking recognition in professional circles, are sometimes marketed to the general public as popular science.[114]

Throughout the 19th century, historical-comparative linguistics developed highly precise methods that allowed scholars to reconstruct past stages of language with remarkable accuracy. These methods remain foundational and are rarely questioned in serious academic circles, while their neglect or rejection is a hallmark of pseudo-scientific approaches to language history. The challenge has never been

[111] Tóth Gergely: *Egy laicizált (nem laikus!) ex-japanológus feljegyzései.* JustACoolDude-WTW Press 2026. pp. 36-56. https://archive.org/details/egy-laicizalt-ex-japanologus-feljegyzesei (accessed: 2026 July)
[112] Honti László: *Anyanyelvünk atyafiságáról, és a nyelvrokonság ismérvéről* - Tények és vágyak. Tinta Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 2012. p. 120.
[113] Honti László: *Anyanyelvünk atyafiságáról, és a nyelvrokonság ismérvéről* - Tények és vágyak. Tinta Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 2012. pp. 100-109.
[114] Johanna Laakso: *A (magyar) finnugrisztikának még mindig legitimálnia kell önmagát?* In: Bakró-Nagy Marianne: Okok és okozat. A magyar nyelv eredetéről történeti, szociálpszichológiai és filozófiai megközelítésben. Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 2018. pp. 14-15.

the science of historical linguistics itself, but rather the attempt to link the history of language with the history of a people. National romanticism reinforced this connection by portraying language as central to national identity, and linguists often emphasized this to highlight the political and national significance of their work. Today, the ethnolinguistic assumption – the identification of ethnic identity with language – resurfaces in different forms. In some cases, it is fueled by European neo-nationalism and right-wing populism, while in others it supports the preservation of native languages and the cultural and political empowerment of minorities. The Hungarian language, lacking close relatives, makes this assumption particularly compelling, as there is no "almost Hungarian" language for comparison, unlike in Germanic or Finnic language families. Johanna Laakso aptly notes that in the second half of the 20th century, several generations of *linguists* grew up without even learning the *basics of historical linguistics*. As a result, there are still established linguists, PhDs, and professors who *fail to understand that historical models, sound changes, and family trees are not merely symbols or metaphors*. Historical linguistics is not composed of arbitrary constructs designed solely to elegantly explain similarities between languages. A reconstructed proto-language is not just one of many theoretical possibilities but a real entity: without a common ancestor, linguistic kinship cannot be explained. It is true, however, that we can only create a simplified and highly stylized representation of this common ancestor. A scenario in which two languages were originally unrelated but later became related *does not exist*.[115]

Until the 1880s in Hungary, the term *rokonság (kinship)* appeared in linguistic debates of the 1850s–1860s in two largely incompatible senses, without this ambiguity being recognized. To address "linguistic kinship" (Sprachsippe) in the modern sense, it was necessary to clarify several key concepts: the notion of kinship (Sippe) as a relationship of descent, established in the work of Charles Darwin and, in linguistics, August Schleicher, distinguishing it from mere similarity (Ähnlichkeit vs. Verwandtschaft); the strict separation of linguistic kinship from biological or "blood" kinship; and the historical possibility of language shifts, whereby entire populations could change languages – sometimes multiple times – during migrations. Since these conceptual clarifications only took place between the 1850s and 1880s in both

[115] Johanna Laakso: *A (magyar) finnugrisztikának még mindig legitimálnia kell önmagát?* In: Bakró-Nagy Marianne: Okok és okozat. A magyar nyelv eredetéről történeti, szociálpszichológiai és filozófiai megközelítésben. Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 2018. pp. 21-22.

universal and Hungarian linguistics, debates on the Hungarian–Finno-Ugric relationship during this period could not be considered definitive, leaving room for other research directions – now regarded as invalid – that linked Hungarian to various languages.[116] We can observe a wide/wild variety of languages that some Hungarian 'researchers' – often on the more questionable side of scholarship – have attempted to link to Hungarian: Hebrew, Egyptian, Sumerian, Etruscan, Hittite, Basque, Persian, Pelasgian, Greek, Chinese, Sanskrit, English, Tibetan, Tamil, Koryak, Kamchadal, Yukaghir, Japanese, Ainu, Dravidian, Māori, Magar, Chin, Lepcha, Dafla, Abor-Miri, Khasi, Mikir, Munda, Gondi, Armenian, Bodo, Koch, Garo, Kachari, Manipuri, Telugu, Mehal, Brahui, Takpa, Manyak, Sokpa, Horpa, Sherpa, Sunwar, Gurung, Rodong, Chaurasya, Kulung, Bahing, Lohorung, Sampang, Dumi, Dzongkha, Kham, Humla Bhotia, German, and Latin. Attempts were made to link Hungarian with Chinese, notably by Lajos Podhorszky (1877) and later Antal Velics (1899), who argued for a broad "Ural-Altaic" grouping that included numerous Eurasian languages. (Antal Velics was a medically trained doctor who earned his doctorate in Budapest in 1879 and spent six years studying nervous disorders at Rókus Hospital while also publishing medical research. Due to declining health, he later left regular practice. After retiring from medicine, he turned his focus to Eastern languages, beginning his study of Chinese in 1897. His comparative research on Chinese and Japanese made him well known in literary and intellectual circles. His major works on these subjects were published in multiple languages, including Hungarian, German, French, English, and Japanese.)[117] Vilmos Prőhle tried to demonstrate a relationship between Japanese and Uralic (including Hungarian) by citing morphological similarities and proposing 90 lexical comparisons in 1916–17. However, his evidence ultimately fails to hold up: the similarities are merely typological, the word comparisons (or rather, 'etymological gymnastics') are weak or coincidental, and crucial core vocabulary – such as pronouns and numerals – is missing, making any claim of linguistic kinship unconvincing. Ferenc Pap argued in favor of a Hungarian–Japanese language kinship in 1942, based almost exclusively on word comparisons. In 1980–81 and 1997, the émigré linguist Lajos Kazár argued for a Japanese–Altaic and Japanese–Uralic relationship, proposing hundreds of

[116] Békés Vera: *A „nyelvrokonság" terminus fogalomtörténeti fordulatai*. In: Bakró-Nagy Marianne: Okok és okozat. A magyar nyelv eredetéről történeti, szociálpszichológiai és filozófiai megközelítésben. Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 2018. pp. 52-53.
[117] Vasárnapi Újság 1915. 62. évf. 9. szám, p. 142.

lexical similarities and suggesting that the ancestors of Japanese and Uralic peoples once lived together in Northern Eurasia before migrating in opposite directions. Nevertheless, his comparisons do not follow established linguistic principles, making his conclusions untenable.[118] In 1997, Lajos Kazár's trilingual book titled *Are Japanese and Hungarian Related? Sind Japanisch und Ungarisch verwandt? A japán és a magyar nyelv rokonok?* (Pécs) was published. The work essentially consists of Japanese–Uralic word comparisons illustrated with pictures. From the introduction, we learn nothing about the author's etymological principles. The fundamental issue with Kazár's ideas is that he alters the linguistic evidence to fit his hypothesis rather than testing the hypothesis against the evidence. His etymologies are unreliable because he does not establish clear phonological correspondences or explain semantic shifts. He often compares words with multiple meanings but never specifies which meaning is primary, which is essential in etymological work.[119]

In armchair linguistics, we often find hyperbolic claims – meant to support Hungarian–Japanese language kinship theories – that Hungarian and Japanese are both language isolates: languages with no demonstrable relatives in terms of geographic proximity. (The claim is technically true only in a *geographic* sense: both Hungarian and Japanese have no closely related languages in the regions surrounding their borders.) Alexander Vovin (late Adjunct Professor of Linguistics Department of Linguistics University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Honolulu) argued that Japanese is not an isolate in the strict linguistic sense. What is often overlooked is the term "Japonic languages", introduced by Leon Serafim in the early 1990s as a cover term for both Japanese and Ryukyuan. This avoids confusion between the family name (Japonic) and one of its branches (Japanese). Japanese is therefore part of the Japonic family, which has two branches: Japanese (including Japanese and Hachijō) and Ryukyuan (usually divided into Northern and Southern groups). By contrast, Ainu constitutes a small language family with two branches (Hokkaido–Kuril and Sakhalin), though it shows far less internal diversity and has no clear external relatives. Despite sharing a Subject–Object–Verb structure with neighboring languages, Ainu is otherwise structurally distinct. Thus, Japonic is no more an isolate than Indo-European: both are language families, differing only in size. The label "isolate" is sometimes misleadingly applied to small families, even when internal

[118] Pusztay János: *Még mindig ugor-török háború.* Nap Kiadó, 2020. pp. 17-19., 21-28.
[119] See also: Finnisch-Ugrische Mitteilungen 18-19. 1994/95. pp. 181-187

diversity exists. At the same time, linguists have not established any external genetic relationship for Japonic. Vovin also emphasized that “Altaic” is not a valid language family but a *Sprachbund*, in which similarities among Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic languages largely reflect long-term contact, chance resemblances, or purely speculative etymologies. (The broader term “Uralo-Altaic”, still found in non-specialist literature, was already disproven over a century ago.)[120] Vovin argues that recent efforts to link Japanese to the so-called Altaic languages are even less convincing than earlier attempts.[121] Despite repeated and severe scholarly criticism, such claims continue to reappear, though they are best met with skepticism – and even humor – rather than taken seriously. His conclusion is clear: Japanese belongs to the Japonic language family and has no demonstrable genetic relationship to any other known language family.[122] The idea of Hungarian and Japanese as language isolates is inevitably linked to another concept, the ‘island mentality’, which refers to the heightened sense of “us versus them” that can develop in geographically or linguistically ‘isolated’ communities. It is characterized by strong local pride and suspicion of outside influence. At the same time, it can serve as a protective mechanism, helping these ‘isolated’ cultures preserve their identity over long periods despite external pressures.

[120] Alexander Vovin's thoughts on the PMJS Forum (https://groups.google.com/g/pmjs?pli=1) 16, 18, 19, 22 April 2015. See also: Alexander Vovin: *Japanese, Korean, and other ‘Non-Altaic’ Languages. Review article of Robbeets, Martine Irma (2005): Is Japanese related to Korean, Tungusic, Mongolic and Turkic?* In: Central Asiatic Journal 53.1. pp. 105-147.
[121] For a short historiography of the Japanese-Altaic theories in Japan, see: Masayoshi Shibatani: *The Languages of Japan (Cambridge Language Surveys)*. Cambridge University Press 2005.
[122] Alexander Vovin: *Origins of the Japanese Language*. Online Publication Date: Sep 2017., p. 25. DOI: 10.1093/acreforc/9780199384655.013.277

Back of two brushes - with chrysanthemums and butterflies by Júlia Zsolnay, c. 1896 (Iparművészeti Múzeum)

Today, the fundamental procedures of comparative linguistics are well established, and their validity has been proven in practice, for example, in the determination of language families. Comparative linguistics follows several key principles that pseudoscientific dabblers often ignore. The *Principle of Regular Sound Correspondence* states that in etymologically identical words, a specific sound in one language – in the same phonetic environment – corresponds to a specific sound in another language and to no other or multiple sounds. Depth of knowledge is essential: to compare two languages rigorously, one must possess a thorough understanding of both, including not only their current states but also their historical development. *Historical phonology* provides the foundation for comparison of other linguistic elements, such as morphology, where sounds and markers of common origin have often changed significantly over time in related languages. Syntax alone is not proof of linguistic kinship, as similarities in sentence structure are primarily typological coincidences; however, a consistent series of syntactic traits, when combined with other linguistic evidence, can meaningfully contribute to determining relationships. Finally, the selection of vocabulary is critical: *core vocabulary* – including pronouns, simple numbers, body parts, basic kinship terms, natural objects and phenomena, animal and plant names, and verbs expressing elementary actions or states – can be compared with high confidence, as these words are found in every

language.[123] Linguist and self-described “dilettantologist” László Honti has long observed the activities of “nonsense linguists” and “proto-historians”, finding great entertainment in their pedantic and often contradictory pronouncements. Honti judges that the statements of the “*unlearned apostles of Hungarian nonsense linguistics*” are: a) products of a compulsion to perform arising from near-infinite ignorance; b) morbid manifestations of an injured national self-consciousness; and c) in the case of learned individuals, both domestic and foreign, products of a pathological itch for attention. The primary hallmarks of such authors’ statements are ignorance, distortion, and hyperbole. The unlearned dabblers in linguistics usually have no conception of the facts uncovered by science, while the learned individuals simply neglect those facts and compulsively perform in public due to their craving for notoriety.[124] According to Gerhard Doerfer, science is the study of what is provable. Viewed in this way, we can distinguish between three states. The first is the ***Proven***, which may consist of logical or mathematical certainty or refer to observations perceived directly through our senses. The second is ***Full Possibility***, in which something is not fully proven but a series of criteria or indicators supports the validity of the thesis, as in legal evidence or scientific hypotheses. In such cases, these mutually supporting criteria form a coherent, closed system. The rejection of incorrect theses also belongs to the domain of science. The third is ***Empty Possibility***, the opposite of full possibility, which falls entirely outside the scope of science. It consists of unverifiable assumptions that do not form a coherent, logical system. We can do nothing with such assertions: the proponent of the thesis cannot prove the claim, and it cannot be refuted. To remain within the field of linguistics, ideas of Japanese–Hungarian linguistic kinship belong to this category of empty possibilities. Such linguistic dilettantism, or amateur linguistic views, belongs to a sphere outside science – the realm of empty possibilities – insofar as its assumptions are scientifically unverifiable and contradict established knowledge, even though experts can readily refute them. What interests the dilettante linguist above all is the origin of words; this is the primary hunting ground for the ‘scientific’ activity of amateur linguists. Other levels of language, such as linguistic structure, morphology, syntax, and the study of typological and genetic relationships, fall – with few exceptions –

[123] Pusztay János: *Még mindig ugor-török háború.* Nap Kiadó, 2020. pp. 80-85.
[124] Honti László: *Anyanyelvünk és népünk előéletéről fabrikált tévtanok háttere.* In: Bakró-Nagy Marianne: Okok és okozat. A magyar nyelv eredetéről történeti, szociálpszichológiai és filozófiai megközelítésben. Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 2018. pp. 161., 166.

outside their horizon.[125] Therefore, pseudolinguistics is characterized by a disregard for established linguistic methods and concepts, and by the failure to base conclusions on systematically collected and critically evaluated evidence. Instead, proponents selectively use material that supports their views, present unfounded assumptions as facts, and build increasingly speculative theories on them. These ideas are typically advanced by individuals without formal linguistic training, often accompanied by a hostile stance toward established fields such as Finno-Ugric studies, sometimes framed in ideological or conspiratorial terms. Overall, pseudoscience appeals primarily to emotions and psychological needs, while science appeals to rational thought, putting it at a disadvantage in public debates. Engaging directly with pseudoscience is often futile: refutations must be endlessly repeated, which may even reinforce believers' views, and can raise ethical questions about criticizing or dehumanizing individuals who may be psychologically vulnerable. Although some attempts were made in Hungary between the 1990s and the late 2010s to refute pseudoscience through dialogue, these efforts have largely disappeared since COVID-19. Direct engagement with pseudoscience has usually proven counterproductive, often amounting to "feeding the trolls of science". Consequently, the author of this book believes there is little point in attempting to place pseudoscience, myths, or faith into any dialogue grounded in scientific consensus or factual argument. When it comes to pseudoscience, one must call it out for what it is: without hesitation, politeness, or compromise. One of the main problems is that every 30 to 40 years, a group of enthusiastic proponents of Hungarian–Asian linguistic and genetic relationship theories reemerges, typically numbering around half a dozen ideologically driven Hungarian and international rogue scientists – or "regime-scientists" – closely aligned with right-wing ideologies and governments. Those explicitly promoting the Hungarian–Japanese relationship theory are drawn from this small circle. In Hungary, these groups include various "regime-archeogeneticists", "regime-linguists", and "regime-historians" (notably, a significant number are low-ranking secondary school teachers) who occasionally stir the stagnant waters of public debates. Their status is often elevated more by governmental support of their pseudoscientific endeavors than by their intellectual capabilities, skills, or the quality of their work. So, it is understandable that, rather than repeatedly debunking specific claims, a more effective approach is for science

[125] Gerhard Doerfer: *Nostratismus. Illič-Svytič und die Folgen.* UAJb. NF 12, 1993, pp. 17–18.

to step back and examine pseudoscience itself as a social and psychological phenomenon, focusing on why people are drawn to it. This is exactly why any ideas of Hungarian–Japanese kinship should be considered not from the perspective of genetics or linguistics, but rather from sociology, psychology, or even political science.

The heated Hungarian debates surrounding the Finno-Ugric linguistic relationship – particularly in the decades following the 1850s – were intensely fueled by immediate political and ideological passions.[126] Put very simply, during this period, the rejection of the Finno-Ugric descent theory was very often linked to the idea of commitment to national independence. Interest in the East among Hungarian elites was driven by political opposition to Habsburg rule and a romantic focus on pre-settlement origins. At the same time, the acceptance or rejection of the Finno-Ugric linguistic relationship truly functions as a watershed: it acts as the dividing line between science and pseudoscience.[127] It is (or should be) the responsibility of education – and thus of textbooks – to prevent the spread of erroneous theories and views. In contrast, according to Panna Lajos, Hungarian history textbooks used in the 2020s argue against Finno-Ugric kinship. Rather than emphasizing linguistic affinity, they focus specifically on ethnic kinship, drawing on origin myths as well as genetic, ethnographic, and archaeological findings to support this perspective. The findings of linguistics are included only as one of several hypotheses of ethnic kinship, presented as merely one theory among many.[128] Overall, Panna Lajos notes that it can be stated that the textbooks used mandatorily in Hungarian secondary education do not devote sufficient attention to the unambiguous clarification of the concept of linguistic kinship. In one textbook, the ideas of linking Hungarian to Sumerian, Hunnic, Hebrew, Japanese, and Greek,

[126] These passions led some Hungarian travelers to journey to Asian Russia to conduct ethnographic expeditions and contribute to debates about Hungarian origins. They were often supported by Hungarian aristocratic patrons. Hungarian travelers frequently emphasized a search for ancestral roots to gain local support, while distancing themselves from imperial or commercial motives. Their work was facilitated by strong academic ties with Russian scholars, as well as by the diplomatic and social networks of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which enabled access to regions such as Russia and China. See: Csaba Mészáros – Stefan Krist – Vsevolod Bashkuev – Luboš Bělka – Zsófia Hacsek – Zoltán Nagy – István Sántha – Ildikó Sz. Kristóf: *Ethnographic Accounts of Visitors from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to the Asian Peripheries of Russia and Their Contribution to the Development of Systematic Ethnological Studies in the Monarchy: Preliminary Results and Research Perspectives* In: Acta Ethnographica Hungarica 62(2), pp. 465–498. (2017). DOI: 10.1556/022.2017.62.2.10

[127] Békés Vera: *A „nyelvrokonság" terminus fogalomtörténeti fordulatai*. In: Bakró-Nagy Marianne: Okok és okozat. A magyar nyelv eredetéről történeti, szociálpszichológiai és filozófiai megközelítésben. Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 2018. pp. 53-54.

[128] Lajos Panna: *A finnugor nyelvrokonság a mai középiskolai nyelvtankönyvekben*. In: Debreceni Szemle, 2024/32/1 p. 41. https://doi.org/10.59424/debreceniszemle/2024/32/1/41-55

appear briefly. Yet, it does not explicitly emphasize that these attempts are erroneous and therefore not scientifically accepted. The descriptions of these affinities are restricted to names, dates, and titles, leaving them almost entirely without critique. In another textbook, Hebrew, Greek, Sumerian, Etruscan, Latin, Japanese, English, Maori, and Armenian are mentioned as a mere list. (Following this, the book declares that only the Uralic kinship is scientifically accepted.) In both textbooks, these erroneous linguistic affinity attempts remain without critique or explanation; based on these books, students will not understand why science rejects them. Flipping through these textbooks, one may form a dual impression: while Hungarian textbooks clearly accept Finno-Ugric kinship, they often simultaneously seek to relativize it. It is regrettable that, by the 2020s, textbooks mandated for use in Hungarian education insufficiently present the evidence for Uralic linguistic kinship and fail to equip students to distinguish between myths and scientifically established linguistic relationships.[129] It is also telling to take a brief look at the authors of these mandatory school textbooks, who are closely aligned with the government: two of them are affiliated with the *Magyarságkutató Intézet (Institute of Hungarian Research)*, a government-funded, heavily ideologized pseudo–think tank established to study "Hungarianness".

Linguistic and genetic kinship narratives frequently make explicit reference to national pride. Pride has two aspects: an emotion and a disposition. As an emotion, it is a positive feeling about one's own worth, rooted in internalizing others' affirmations of one's actions or qualities. This feedback loop validates the individual and reflects inner strength. Pride also manifests as a general disposition, influencing behavior by either motivating or restraining actions. Overall, pride is closely tied to self-confidence and a sense of personal value. According to János Weiss, Stoicism held that pride is an emotion that is inherently harmful, regardless of its object. Later, in popular Stoic philosophy, pride gradually came to be seen as a generally problematic concept. At this stage, the concepts of pride and self-satisfaction began to intertwine. Transience should teach people humility, leading to a fundamental idea: the recognition of one's limitations should prevent pride and self-conceit. Pride, then, is not the strengthening of the soul, but the soul's deception about life. Compared to the original Stoic program, a new emphasis emerged: refuting the soul's self-deception takes

[129] Lajos Panna: *A finnugor nyelvrokonság a mai középiskolai nyelvtankönyvekben*. In: Debreceni Szemle, 2024/32/1 p. 44., 49., 52. https://doi.org/10.59424/debreceniszemle/2024/32/1/41-55

precedence over merely strengthening the soul. Pride was regarded as a form of worldly vanity. David Hume nearly arrived at the view that pride is a social category: a person is not simply proud of themselves, but *proud of being able to be proud of themselves*. This implies that their qualities, abilities, and achievements have been positively reinforced through social interactions. Several modern thinkers have shared similar views. Blaise Pascal, for instance, argued that pride serves as a counterbalance to our miseries, either concealing them or, if it exposes them, bringing honor by acknowledging them. János Weiss thoughtfully elaborates on the philosophical approach to pride as follows: the *internally driven* person possesses a solid core of personality, accompanied by a kind of inward-looking pride – one that is generally based on significant external achievements. In contrast, the *externally driven* person is characterized by boasting. But what can they boast about if not their achievements? The rise of this externally driven type can also be seen as a general threat to democracy. In the 1950s and 1960s, Herbert Marcuse developed a new analytical perspective that applied psychological categories to political and sociological analysis. Marcuse began with the social functionalization of psychological facts: society no longer leaves the individual in their private reality but transforms them into a public personality, turning psychological problems into political ones. Private deviations increasingly reflect societal deviations, and the resolution of personal disturbances depends more directly on addressing collective ones. The mobilization of pride, in this context, creates a new form of affirmative culture. Pride serves to create satisfaction; there is also a form of pride that exists prior to and independent of any activity. Nationalist unity can thus become a medium for pride. The politics of (national) pride, defined in this way, follows the pattern of desire fulfillment – but this is not genuine fulfillment; rather, it is self-celebration rooted in national pride. Such pride must be constantly reinforced: maintaining and continually strengthening the affirmative character of public and political discourse serves this purpose. Meanwhile, the critical spirit sinks to unprecedented depths.[130]

Hungarian Political Japanophilia: Self-validation, Wishful Thinking, and Basking In Reflected Popularity of the Other

[130] Weiss János: *A büszkeség labirintusai.* In: Szenvedély, szerelem, narrációk. ELTE, Budapest, 2014. pp. 226-241.

It is worth examining how political Japanophilia intersects with public narratives of Hungarian-Japanese kinship as they are presented and shaped within the political sphere. Since no previous research has addressed political Japanophilia, either in Hungary or elsewhere, it is timely to explore and analyze these narratives. Over the last twenty years, right-wing Hungarian political-ideological narratives about Japan have taken two main forms: direct and indirect. Direct narratives are mainly characterized by heavily biased, pseudo-scientific references to an alleged close linguistic and/or genetic kinship between Hungarians and the Japanese. In parallel to this, a more subtle form has emerged, employing unvalidated, misleading, far-fetched, or simply empty pseudo-comparisons of the two countries, or suggestions to import certain Japanese societal or policy elements in order to strengthen Hungary. The message behind these narratives often serves Hungarian exceptionalism, national pride and over-valorized ethnocentric political-ideological implications. These messages are typically delivered by those close to the right-wing political establishment. Any truth, plausibility, or need for scientific substantiation behind these claims is disregarded and overlooked.

One might assume that these political-ideological narratives are surfacing in a rather isolated and unstructured manner. Although, if we observe the Japan-related political discourse of the last twenty years in Hungary, it is hard not to see a slowly shaping strategic intention behind this phenomenon. The narratives discussed in this section seem to serve distinct goals, primarily: riding the wave of the contemporary, sweeping popularity of the 'Japan' brand by basking in its reflected overall popularity. Other goals include seeking personal benefits for the propagators of these ideas within the establishment they are part of by subtly nudging their peers in the same ideological echo chamber with their message; making clickbaity, sensational statements that create buzz in the (social) media; propagating notions of Hungarian ethnocentric exceptionalism; tickling the 'ideological receptors' in Hungarian public discourse by deepening polarization along the global-national, left-right, West-East ideological axis[131]; and finally,

[131] A Hungarian public figure, Márton Attila Farkas, made a brilliant observation in a Facebook post in January 2025, writing a satirical song to capture the trollish nature and ultimate creed of Hungarian right-wing political rhetoric: according to his song, "*nothing matters, as long as the libs keep screaming*". In this poem, the East appears as the new West.
https://www.facebook.com/martin.ethelwolf/posts/pfbid02rzPuGcYBuC3fBUjdWRyNAMsNdw81KhxwfMEHLew7ptceikypwFWn5my3bi6zGFE1l (Accessed: 2026 March)

promoting a nationalized religion by narrating stories of Hungary's imagined past, present, and future. At the same time, they shape 'ethnogenesis politics' as part of the country's remembrance/memory politics[132] and influence Hungarian public opinion's affinity towards an idealized and mythicized national status and pride. In Ontological Security Studies (OSS) scholarship, national pride narratives are one of the four main narrative types examined in relation to how states and nations construct their identity through stories aimed at stability and coherence. A 'narrative of pride', while emphasizing national greatness, often masks underlying insecurity, as those who loudly assert their status may, in fact, be revealing doubts about it. When a nation experiences a decline in traditional power, such as military or economic strength, it may compensate by highlighting alternative forms of influence. (For instance, Russia in the 1990s framed soft power as a 'shortcut to greatness', while discussions of American cultural dominance have been interpreted as a response to declining hard power. Similarly, Japan's global promotion of its popular culture has been seen as a form of 'soft narcissism', reinforcing national identity through cultural influence.)[133]

This section critically examines how narratives about Japan are constructed and used within specific political and ideological contexts in Hungary. It explores the motivations, power dynamics, and strategies behind these representations, contributing to the understanding of cross-cultural perceptions. The analysis highlights the role of historical legacies and ideology in shaping views of the "Other" and shows how narratives can be tools for advancing ideological agendas, constructing national identity,[134] and mobilizing public opinion.

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[132] "Remembrance politics" and "memory politics" are terms commonly used in the study of history, sociology, and political science to describe how societies and political actors engage with the past, particularly around events that hold significant social, cultural, or political meaning. In reality, these concepts are often contested, and there is no common agreement on their definitions, which frequently depend on their contextual use. Given that these terms are frequently used in close relation to the Holocaust, it may be useful to introduce a more focused term to complement the existing ones. The concept of ethnogenesis politics adds a more nuanced layer by concentrating specifically on the ways in which memories and commemorations are used to construct or reinforce a collective ethnic or national identity. While memory politics addresses the broader debates over historical narratives and remembrance politics deals with formal commemorative practices, ethnogenesis politics emphasizes how these narratives and practices are strategically employed to forge or redefine the identity and cohesion of an ethnic or national group.

[133] Linus Hagström: *Great Power Narcissism and Ontological (In)Security: The Narrative Mediation of Greatness and Weakness in International Politics* In: International Studies Quarterly (2021) 65, pp. 334.

[134] National identity, according to Anthony D. Smith, is the ongoing process of maintaining and interpreting a shared set of values, memories, myths, symbols, and traditions that define a nation. It depends on individuals actively identifying with this shared heritage and continuously reinforcing it through their own interpretations and participation. Anthony D. Smith: *The Nation Made Real - Art and National Identity in Western Europe, 1600 – 1850.* Oxford University Press, 2013.

There is currently no research available on the subject of political Japanophilia[135] in Hungary. Still, there is one particularly relevant piece of research from 2015 on the "Asianization of national fantasies in Hungary" written by Chris Moreh.[136] In his paper, Moreh provides a critical analysis of the Hungarian government's central political discourse concerning Asia, examining how Hungarian right-wing politics radicalized its turn towards the region. This discourse touches on sentiments of national identity. As noted by Moreh, Hungary found itself in its deepest crisis since World War II after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Nevertheless, within just six years of achieving accession to the European Union in 2004, Hungarian political rhetoric became highly critical of EU policies. To counterbalance its dependence on Western financial institutions, the Hungarian government worked to renew economic relations with Russia, the Middle East, the Caucasus, and China. Around the same time, radicalized Eurosceptic voices began to emerge within Hungary. This partly catalyzed the development of a widely debated and researched policy known as the "*Eastern Opening*" or "*Opening to the East*" (*Keleti nyitás*). An interesting aspect of this rhetoric is that Hungary's international political identity is depicted as being in a state of superposition, where it remains open to offers from both the East and the West. Depending on which offer is accepted, Hungary's identity will be shaped and steered in one direction or the other. Currently, Hungarian identity is being steered toward an Eastern authoritarian model.m

In connection with these events, it is important to mention the role of Hungarian Turanism and its relation to political Japanophilia in Hungary. As defined earlier in this book, Turanism is a pseudoscientific political-ideological movement advocating for close cooperation or political unification among peoples claimed by its supporters to share cultural, linguistic, or ethnic ties and to have origins in Inner and Central Asia. This includes groups such as the Turks, Mongols, Tungus, Hungarians, Finns, Estonians, and even the Japanese. Turanism aims to collaborate on shared interests and resist the cultural and political influences of

[135] The American writer and journalist Roland Kelts defines Japanophilia as the "*outsiders' infatuation with Japan's cultural character*". See: Roland Kelts: *Japanamerica: How Japanese Pop Culture Has Invaded the U.S.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Foreword. Political Japanophilia expands on this by describing an overly positive (re-)positioning and representation of the political Self by leveraging Japan's popularity. It involves using Japan's appeal and image to enhance one's own political standing, identity, or agenda, often by aligning with or adopting perceived positive aspects of Japan's cultural or political narrative.

[136] Moreh, C. (2016). *The Asianization of national fantasies in Hungary: A critical analysis of political discourse*. International Journal of Cultural Studies, 19(3), 341-353. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877915573781

European powers.[137] During the Communist/Socialist period up until 1989, Turanism survived primarily thanks to emigrant promoters of the idea living in exile in the West, who ardently sustained it until it could be openly discussed again within Hungarian borders. After the change of regime in Hungary in 1989, Turanism has resurfaced in alternative spheres. Current Hungarian Turanist discourses are based on the myth of cultural and racial affinity with Asia, and we can consider them an autoimmune reaction or a collective coping mechanism in response to Hungarian national traumas.

Advertisement for János Kotányi's store selling Japanese art objects (darabanth.hu)

After the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, Turanism changed from an ideology of confident

[137] Further reading on the political mobilization of Turanism: Mikael-Arman Ahrari: *Eurasia Calling: Political context of scientific Turanism in the writings of Max Müller and Yrjö Koskinen, and its development into the 20th century Pan-Turanism*. BA Thesis, 2020. Utrecht University https://studenttheses.uu.nl/handle/20.500.12932/36141

Hungarian imperialism into one of disappointment, resentment, and rejection of the West. Instead of expressing strength, it became a way of coping with national loss and decline. This new view of language and history emerged from Central and Eastern European patterns of national identity-building. It reflects feelings of fragmentation, insecurity, and historical trauma, while offering a sense of unity and continuity.[138] (At the same time, toying with Turanistic ideas can prove profitable and can thus be seen as a clever profit-making activity. One quirky example of how the "Turanian" and "Hungarian-Japanese kinship" hodgepodge spills into unexpected corners of public life in the early 2020s is a Hungarian man's initiative: he created a new martial arts business called "Turan-Jitsu".[139] His reasoning was that the connection between Japan and Hungary lies in their supposed genetic kinship – that both peoples belong to the "Turanian ethnic group". One thing is certain: the cash keeps rolling in, proving that anything "Turanistic" is apparently still a profitable selling point.)

Since Chris Moreh notes that this process resembles Eurasianist discourses in Russia,[140] it is necessary to refer briefly to Russian Eurasianism. By the late nineteenth century, many Russian intellectuals and nationalists had grown disillusioned with Western Europe's democracy, rationalism, materialism, and atheism, and saw attempts to match Europe's material progress as futile. They increasingly framed Russian national identity as distinct. Some embraced Slavophilia, celebrating Russia's Slavic heritage and her role as liberator of Balkan Slavs. Others turned to Asianism, viewing Russia's roots and future in Asia, emphasizing a "spiritual kinship" with Asian peoples and the tsar's mission to unite them. Both ideologies shaped Russia's foreign policy and continental expansion in

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[138] Máté-Tóth András – Balassa Bernadett: *A traumatizált társadalmi tudat dimenziói. Adatok a sebzett kollektív identitás elméletéhez*. In: Szociológiai Szemle 32(2), 2002., pp. 58-59.; This is not only a Hungarian phenomenon but a broader Central and Eastern European one. The region can be seen as marked by collective trauma because modernity often weakens community ties and trust. Political systems in the region repeatedly had to redefine who belonged to the nation, including questions of identity, citizenship, and national boundaries. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, societies in Central and Eastern Europe were forced to revisit these questions again and again due to major political and social upheavals.

[139] http://turanjitsu.blogspot.com/; https://turan-jitsu.webnode.hu/rolunk/ (accessed:%202026%20April)

[140] Moreh, C. (2016). *The Asianization of national fantasies in Hungary: A critical analysis of political discourse*. International Journal of Cultural Studies, 19(3), 341-353. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877915573781; In fact, Turanism was taken seriously in Russia and notably recognized by Russian Eurasianists. Eurasianism can be understood as a response to Pan-Turanian and Pan-Turkic ideas.Mikael-Arman Ahrari: *Eurasia Calling: Political context of scientific Turanism in the writings of Max Müller and Yrjö Koskinen, and its development into the 20th century Pan-Turanism*. BA Thesis, 2020. p. 27. Utrecht University https://studenttheses.uu.nl/handle/20.500.12932/36141

the late nineteenth century.[141] This narrative later came to involve multiple interrelated layers of geopolitics, including disinformation and Russian intelligence operations in Hungary since the 2010s. These connections can also be understood through the framework of hybrid warfare. On one hand, we must consider the role of the "identity politics wedge". A key tenet of Russian hybrid strategy – exemplified by Alexander Dugin's[142] Neo-Eurasianism – is emotional and cultural distancing from the West (the EU and NATO). Any theory that traces the origins of the Hungarian people to the East – whether Turanism, Hun-Hungarian kinship, or the Hungarian-Japanese connection – undermines the country's "Western Christian" and "European" identity. Therefore, it is in Russia's strategic interest to support extremist or radical groups in Hungary and across Europe. If a narrative can exacerbate social divisions or stoke anti-Western sentiment, Russian intelligence agencies are quick to amplify it through bot networks and media outlets. (That said, there is no direct evidence that Russian intelligence specifically promotes Hungarian-Japanese kinship theories; rather, these theories already have support in Hungary – perhaps to the point that artificial amplification is unnecessary, as they enjoy independent popularity.)

Below, I attempt to contextualize politically colored narratives and discourses on Japan in Hungary, Hungary-Japan relations or comparisons, examining their connection to right-wing Hungarian politics and populism. This analysis is based on public narratives from the past 20 years, approached through an inductive methodology and critical discourse analysis.

Learning from Japan, Comparison with Japan: A Recurring Topos in Right-Wing Hungarian Political Thinking

In 2015, John R. Haines, a Fellow of the American Foreign Policy Research Institute, whose research focused on nationalist movements in Russia and its near abroad, published a paper titled "*Russia, Hungary, and the Quest for Grandeur*".[143] In the paper, he argued that the Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán's political narrative and his idea of Hungarian nationhood is more like a bricolage (a concept

[141] http://heirstothethrone-project.net/?page_id=2357 (accessed: 2026 March)
[142] a Russian political theorist and strategist
[143] John R. Haines: *Russia, Hungary, and the Quest for Grandeur*, FPRI, E-Notes, 2015 December. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/195926/haines_-_orban.pdf (accessed: 2024 June)

by Claude Lévi-Strauss[144]), a "*figurative cobbling together of seemingly disparate*" historic events, myths, and identities in order to "*underpin a defining national grandeur*" (a term by Charles de Gaulle[145]). These are used to structure national (sometimes explicitly ethnogenetic) identities. At one point in the text, in a footnote, Haines introduces the idea of a rather unknown Hungarian philosopher, Bertalan Pethő, who suggested in an article in 2013, titled "*Hungarian Exceptionalism*",[146] that Japanese exceptionalism, often referred to as Nihonjinron,[147] is worthy of investigation by Hungarians. In his article, Pethő defines Japanese exceptionalism in view of the threatening Americanization (or globalization), as a constant historical fight against the transformation of Japan into a consumer society without cultural roots. In other words, as expressed earlier in one of his books about Japan, Pethő believes that Japan can only maintain its leading position through the spirit of Nihonjinron and preserve its own techno-nationalism in an increasingly techno-globalizing world of the 21st century.[148]

The pressing forces and consequences of globalization in Japan are understood as part of the process that gradually erodes traditional national

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[144] Claude Lévi-Strauss (1962). The Savage Mind. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) pp. 17-22.
[145] Charles De Gaulle (1954). Mémoires de guerre, vol. 1, l'Appel 1940-1942. (Paris: Librarie Plon), p. 175. Quoted in Richard Herr (1955). "*The Memoirs of General de Gaulle.*" Yale French Studies. 15 (Social and Political France), 126.
[146] Magyar Szemle [published online 19 October 2013]. https://web.archive.org/web/20180621232402/http://www.magyarszemle.hu/cikk/20040101_hungarian_exceptionalism_ (accessed: 2024 June)
[147] Theories concerning the purported uniqueness of the Japanese. The sense of Japanese superiority, national exceptionalism, and xenophobia developed in Japan in the 20th century and it has Western roots in the pseudoscientific narratives of Social Darwinism. Both Nihonjinron and Social Darwinism have been discredited in academia by now, however, the tenets of Nihonjinron still pervade Japanese society and influence Western orientalist (along with Japanese self-orientalist) narratives about Japan. Some disagree with the view that Nihonjinron has been entirely discredited in academic circles. In 2003, Ian Reader argued that "*the tradition of speculative and empirically ungrounded fantasy, based on a highly partial nationalism, continues to be peddled through the auspices of institutions associated with the academic world*". See: David Huang: *Japanese Ninhonjinron and 1890s American Social Darwinism: Looking to the Past for a Solution to Japan's Vicious Cycle of Homogeneity* https://www.bu.edu/writingprogram/journal/past-issues/issue-9/huang/ (accessed 2024 June); Sherrie Cross (1996) *Prestige and Comfort: The development of Social Darwinism in early Meiji Japan, and the role of Edward Sylvester Morse*. Annals of Science, 53:4, 323-344, DOI: 10.1080/00033799608560820; Befu, Harumi: *Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of Nihonjinron.* Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2001. Dale, Peter: *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*. London: Routledge, 1986.; Ian Reader: *Review: Identity, Nihonjinron, and Academic (Dis)honesty (Reviewed Works: Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of Nihonjinron Harumi BefuA Genealogy of "Japanese" Self-Images Eiji Oguma)* Monumenta Nipponica Vol. 58, No. 1 (Spring, 2003), p. 115.; One peculiar example of the narratives used in Nihonjinron can be found in METI's Wonder Nippon booklet from 2017. According to the booklet, by speaking Japanese – which supposedly surpasses all other languages in its use of vowel sounds – Japanese people have developed a brain structure that processes natural sounds as if they were human language. Wonder Nippon, METI, 2017.
[148] Pethő Bertalan: *japán út/viszony – előzetes a xxi századból*, II. Platón, Budapest 2006. pp. 240. "Techno-globalism" is the term used by policymakers to describe the process of opening government and Research and Development programs to foreign participation. See: Gregory P. Corning: *Japan and the Politics of Techno-globalism*, Routledge, 2002.

identities and discourses. As a result, there is a counteracting force that refocuses on a patriotic sense of nationalism, turning inward to reaffirm Japan as a 'beautiful country'. Many Japanese politicians and commentators share the belief that a key reason for Japan's international stagnation is its citizens' inability to clearly articulate what Japanese identity is and to effectively convey the beauty of Japan's essence to the international community.[149] In analyzing techno-nationalism in Japan, the discourses surrounding technology and innovation – driven by Japan's modern successes in engineering and precision technology – reveal a fusion of postwar nationalism and technologism, which, as Yoshimi Shun'ya insightfully notes, is strongly influenced by Americanism. This fusion has fostered a close link between Japan's confidence in its technological capabilities and its national identity since the 1960s. Yoshimi contends that this reconstruction of national identity, centered on technological strength, largely relies on binary oppositions – artificial distinctions between the Japanese and the 'other', particularly Americans, and to a lesser degree, Europeans.[150] In Koichi Iwabuchi's argument, the Japanese framing of globalization created an imagined version of internationalization, encouraging the Japanese to focus on abstract ideas of 'Japaneseness' rather than real interactions with other cultures. This did not occur solely due to the collision between the West and Japan, but was also driven by the power and capitalist logic of marketing of the cultural industry. It also shares similarities with global postmodernism, where the exotic coexists with the traditional. As Iwabuchi explains,

> "*What is notably striking in Japan is that its own traditionalism is exoticized and becomes part of the range of postmodern, international cultural commodities available to domestic consumers. This is internationalism through nationalism and nationalism through internationalism. Both strengthen each other; internationalism masks and absorbs domestic diversity, while nationalism makes internationalism less threatening and more enjoyable. In doing so, the gaze of Others appreciating Japanese otherness or exoticism often sells most to the Japanese themselves. (...) It seems that this is a moment of declaring the triumph of an Orient which is no longer 'Other', and has indigenised both 'tradition' and the 'Western'. 'We' have both 'tradition' and 'modernity', while 'they' have only the latter, because 'their tradition' has 'melted into air'. The struggle with Westernisation is over. This is a self-confident self-Orientalisation, which boasts about its own cultural*

[149] 安倍晋三『美しい国へ』文藝春秋 2006

[150] Yoshimi, Shun'ya. (1999). `*Made in Japan': the cultural politics of `home electrification' in postwar Japan*. In: Media, Culture & Society, 21(2), 149-171. https://doi.org/10.1177/016344399021002002

'hybridity' (...) And there is a thin line between self-confident self-Orientalism and arrogant cultural nationalism." [151]

It is probably not a coincidence that it was an American researcher who found Pethő's thoughts on Nihonjinron. In 1970s America, influential and prominent neoconservative thinkers (sociologist Nathan Glazer and futurist Herman Kahn) were also trying to use Nihonjinron to build a broader argument about the importance of "culture" and a return to "tradition" as the solution to the United States' economic ills amidst Japan's 'miraculous' economic growth at that time. These American thinkers became 'interpreters of Japan', trying to explain to Americans why Japan had accomplished such success. Their claim was that the successful Japanese growth happened because of Japanese culture and that Japan "*demonstrated a successful marriage between tradition and modernity*".[152] (If we look back in history for theoretical links comparable to American and Hungarian approaches, Fascist Italy offers an interesting parallel. Italian representations of Japan in the 20th century often involved comparisons and processes of identification, based on real or imagined similarities between the two nations. Fascist propaganda, in particular, emphasized these similarities over differences.)[153] In Pethő's own interpretation, there are certain attributes that make 'Japan Japanese': "*the sensibility towards quality and 'Wholeness'; the beauty of abstention, moderation, and even scarcity; the unity of knowledge; and the traditional community life*".[154] (Pethő's characterization shows signs of traditional, exoticistic Orientalism,[155] likely without his awareness.) Later, Pethő argues that Nihonjinron serves as a prevention of the 'sellout of Japanese lives', and questions the quality of modernity and the universality of the West. Pethő emphasizes the fact

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[151] Koichi Iwabuchi: *Complicit exoticism: Japan and its other*. In: Continuum: The Australian Journal of Media & Culture Vol. 8, No. 2, 1994.

[152] Jennifer M. Miller: *Neoconservatives and Neo-Confucians: East Asian Growth and the Celebration of Tradition* Modern Intellectual History (2020), 1–27 doi:10.1017/S147924432000027X; u:japan lecture s08e12 – Jennifer Miller: *Tradition and Growth: American Conservative Adoption of Nihonjin-ron in the 1970s and 1980s* 20.06.2024 https://kalender.univie.ac.at/einzelansicht/?tx_univieevents_pi1[id]=32741 (accessed: 2024 Aug.)

[153] *"(...)from Italian unification to the present day, 'searching for Japan' remains an ideal point of reference for Italians to reflect on the place of Italy in the world.*" Michele Monserrati: *Searching for Japan: 20th Century Italy's Fascination with Japanese Culture.* Liverpool University Press, 2020, p. 236.

[154] Magyar Szemle [published online 19 October 2013]. https://web.archive.org/web/20180621232402/http://www.magyarszemle.hu/cikk/20040101_hungarian_exceptionalism_ (accessed: 2024 June) Translated by the author.

[155] Toshio Miyake: "*Towards Critical Occidentalism Studies Re-inventing the 'West' and 'Japan' in Mangaesque Popular Cultures*". In: Ca' Foscari Japanese Studies 3 – Contemporary Japan Challenges for a World Economic Power in Transition edited by Paolo Calvetti, Marcella Mariotti, 2015, p. 96-98.

that some Western opinions opposed Japanese exceptionalism, labeling Nihonjinron as a fascist idea – a view he strongly disagrees with.[156] In his argument, he called for a Hungarian "*mental regime change*", which cannot be achieved "*without studying the exceptionalities of the Far East*". For Pethő, the secret of Japanese exceptionalism lies in the ability to practice globality locally: paying attention to the 'Whole' while still focusing on local details with integrity, and learning to be self-sufficient without abandoning ambitious plans or succumbing to the allure of consumerism. Pethő had a long history of contemplating Japan and 'Eastern philosophy', although it is questionable if he was a seasoned expert on these subjects by any stretch of the word. Pethő was a psychiatrist, who became the head of the *Postmodernology Research Center at János Kodolányi College* at the beginning of the 2000's. Due to ideological and political reasons during Communist and Socialist times in Hungary, he was unable to pursue philosophical studies. Consequently, he chose to become a psychiatrist, but he did not lose his original interest in philosophy. In relation to philosophy and Japan, he published two books under the title "*japán út/viszony – előzetes a xxi századból I-II.*" (Platón, Budapest) in 2003 and 2006, which were supported financially by the *Japan Foundation* and the *Hungarian National Scientific Research Programme*.[157] In his first book, he expressed his pro-Nihonjinron views by arguing against critiques of it from his philosophical viewpoint, although his text is too dense (filled with Pethő's own neologisms) and likely too incomprehensible for the average reader.[158] On the back cover of his second book published in 2006, he wrote a poem as a short summary of his views: "*peering into a Japanese mirror / deflecting America / sharpens our*

[156] There is also an issue of Western chauvinism when Nihonjinron is criticized. When Western scholars critique Nihonjinron for being nationalistic or overly self-congratulatory, they sometimes do so from a position of assumed superiority, effectively replicating the very kind of exclusivist thinking they aim to challenge. This can result in the critique itself becoming an exercise in Western chauvinism – implying that Western values or perspectives are inherently superior or more 'universal' than Japanese ones. See: Thomas Lamarre: *Between Empire and Nation. The Problem of Influence and Reaction in Postwar Waka Criticism*. In: Livia Monnet (ed.): Approches critiques de la pensée japonaise du XXe siècle, p. 439.; Rey Chow suggests that Western scholarship has traditionally endowed Western texts with a high degree of 'verbal, psychical, and theoretical density', meaning they are analyzed and interpreted with great nuance and depth. In contrast, non-Western works have often been treated in a more superficial or reductive manner, reinforcing cultural biases and hindering a true understanding of non-Western perspectives. According to Chow, by affording non-Western works the same level of intellectual engagement and respect, scholars can move beyond the idealized and often one-dimensional frameworks that perpetuate the East-West binary, allowing for more balanced and meaningful cross-cultural interpretations. Rey Chow: *Ethics after Idealism: Theory, Culture, Ethnicity, Reading*. Indiana University Press, 1998, XXI.

[157] Official research project ID: OTKA T 48370, 2005-2008; http://nyilvanos.otka-palyazat.hu/index.php?menuid=930&lang=HU&num=48370 (accessed: 2024 June)

[158] Pethő Bertalan: *japán út/viszony – előzetes a xxi századból*, I. Platón, Budapest 2006. pp. 177-187.

views inward / and the view of the broken globalization of the first worlds competing with each other / amidst the Hungarian view of joining Europe (in an incessant inconsistency for thousands of years)"[159] It is worth noting the facts that Pethő organized a long series of scientific symposiums and conferences titled the *National Strategy Keystones (Nemzetstratégiai Alappillérek)* in 2006 in Hungary, and he was awarded the Order of Merit of the Hungarian Republic in 2015 by the Orbán regime.[160] These suggest that his views on Japanese national exceptionalism must have garnered some influential recognition in certain (likely predominantly right-wing) political-ideological spheres within Hungary, and his perspectives may still be remembered in these circles. Further evidence supporting the assumption that government circles were engaging with Pethő's work is the fact that the only extensive book review available[161] on Pethő's *japán út/viszony – előzetes a xxi századból I-II.* was written by László Ohnsorge-Szabó, an economist-philosopher who was employed by the *Ministry of Finance* and the *Ministry of National Economy* since 1993.[162] That said, it requires further investigation to determine if, and how, Pethő's suggestions and views were applied in shaping centralized national policies in Hungary.

The next decade saw a reinvigorated political use of the notion of 'Japan', supported vigorously by FIDESZ-affiliated institutions and ideological circles. In 2023, a *Hungarian Ministerial Commissioner For The Support Of Strategic Research at the Prime Minister's Office* (who was a futurologist at the *Hungarian Social Futuring Center* at the same time), co-wrote and edited an unusual book titled *Japan: Society 5.0 – From the Historical Past to the Superintelligent Future, in the Mirror of Hungarian History (Japán: Társadalom 5.0 A történelmi múltból a szuperokos jövőbe – a magyar történelem tükrében)*.[163] This book is full of poor practices, including ideologically biased disseminations and academic misconduct

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[159] The Hungarian original: "*amerikát deflektáló / japán tükörbe nézve / élesedik a rálátás mimagunkra / és a megtört globalizálódás egymással vetélkedő első világaira / az európához (ezer éve szüntelen meghasonlásban) csatlakozás magyar nézetében*" Pethő Bertalan: *japán út/viszony – előzetes a xxi századból* II. Platón, Budapest 2006. Translated by the author.

[160] Hervainé Szabó Gyöngyvér: *Pethő Bertalan határjárásai.* Polgári Szemle, 16. évf. 1–3. szám, 2020, 392–401., DOI: 10.24307/psz.2020.0723

[161] Ohnsorge-Szabó László: *Japán mentalitás – nyugati filozófia; Gondolatok Pethő Bertalan: Japán út/viszony II. c. könyve kapcsán*. Polgári Szemle 2007. február – 3. évfolyam, 2. szám

[162] Since 2012, Ohnsorge-Szabó has served as the Head of the Budget Planning and Summary Unit. In addition, he graduated with a degree in philosophy in 2000 from the Faculty of Humanities at Eötvös Loránd University.

[163] Bartók – Lovászy – Szigeti: *Japán: Társadalom 5.0 A történelmi múltból a szuperokos jövőbe – a magyar történelem tükrében*, Pallas, 2023 Budapest

related to citation practices.[164] It is quite telling that the 456-page book, covering thousands of years of history, was written in less than a year and received profuse support from the *Hungarian National Bank's Pallas Athene Domus Meriti Foundation*.[165] Moreover, more than a year after its publication, the one and only book review available is the ministerial commissioner-futurologist writer-editor's *own self-review*, published in a journal financially supported by the *Hungarian National Bank*.[166]

It is worth analyzing the book briefly. First, the vague definition of the book's genre is intentional: the implicit intentions of the editor-co-writer regarding its use are more ambitious than the explicit self-definition suggests. While the ministerial commissioner-futurologist states in the foreword that the book is not intended for academic use and is neither a scientific book, a history book, a monograph, nor a university lecture note, he envisions it as a quasi-coursebook or textbook.[167] This intention became much clearer during the first public book launch event, supported by the Hungarian National Bank, where one of the roundtable participants explicitly suggested that the book should be used as a university coursebook.[168] The book's target audience is broadly defined, including graduate and undergraduate students, as well as university lecturers. It is also noteworthy that the co-writer-editor welcomes 'enthusiastic amateur historians' as part of the readership – a group that has been actively catered to in Hungary in recent years by FIDESZ-affiliated think tanks, politicians, and even 'academics' with pseudo-scientific and ideologically heavily biased content. There is also a particular focus on the imagined readership in the mind of the futurologist co-writer-editor: his intention is to provide reading material for those who feel "*a sense of responsibility toward our country's future"*. [169] This is intriguing, considering that the authors themselves state that the book

[164] Some parts of the book's text was copied from another work without proper credit or any mention of the original source. (Due to this copyright infringement, a formal legal notice has been sent by a lawyer to the publisher in April 2024.)
[165] For the writing, the Ministerial Commissioner-futurologist, and the other two writers received approximately 30000 USD remuneration (50% was given to Lovászy, the Ministerial Commissioner-futurologist, and the remaining 25-25% was given to the other two co-writers). PADME funding decision, 2021/09/14
[166]
https://polgariszemle.hu/aktualis-szam/223-tudomanyos-muhely-recenziok/1322-recenzio-japan-tarsadalom-5-0-a-tortenelmi-multbol-a-szuperokos-jovobe-a-magyar-tortenelem-tukreben-cimu-konyvrol accessed: (2024 Aug.)
[167] Bartók – Lovászy – Szigeti: Japán: Társadalom 5.0, pp. 12-15. Translated by the author.
[168] See the publisher's Youtube channel (recording of the event)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHvvhQ67kG4&t=377s (accessed: 2024 Aug.)
[169] Bartók – Lovászy – Szigeti: Japán: Társadalom 5.0, p 15. Translated by the author.

primarily aims to present the political, economic, and social changes of the *past*.[170] The co-writer-editor presents the book as offering well-founded, scientific disseminations, but this is nothing more than a bold overstatement. Upon reading the chapters, it becomes evident that the book, at best, most closely resembles a mediocre secondary school history textbook, particularly due to its oversimplified, didactic, and spoon-fed recaps at the end of each chapter. In their book, the authors explain why they chose Japan as a reference point for comparison. They write that "*the country is characterized by modernization based on the preservation of national traditions, which never means the uncritical adoption of Western examples, but the creation of a characteristic unorthodox, third way*".[171] This reiterates, or echoes in an implicit way, Bertalan Pethő's aforementioned views that Hungary could learn from Japan's Nihonjinron and Japanese techno-nationalism in an America-driven, techno-globalizing world. We can also trace the authors' wishful thinking in relation to Japan when they state that "*we would really like to be as advanced as they are*".[172] Apparently, the authors do not even attempt to remain objective. Whenever they can choose between a scientifically founded interpretation and one that is more favorable to the state supported ideology (especially, its ethnocentrism and ethnogenesis politics), they always choose the latter, regardless of any scientific or factual basis, though they might be a bit cautious in choosing their words. This is evident in their wishful-thinking-filled interpretation of the alleged kinship between the Hungarians and the Huns, and especially in the purported relatedness of the Hungarian and Japanese languages. They leave the door open to popular pseudo-scientific interpretations by stating that *"If the Altai origin of the Japanese language were to be proven, then a distant relationship between the Hungarian and Japanese languages could be assumed*".[173] We cannot ignore the fact that the overall handling of 'comparisons' is outrageous: they are so generalized and so empty that it seems either the authors had very shallow ideas and knowledge about the subjects of their comparisons or they had to work very hard to fabricate something that qualifies as a comparison.

[170] Bartók – Lovászy – Szigeti: Japán: Társadalom 5.0, p 20. Translated by the author.
[171] Bartók – Lovászy – Szigeti: Japán: Társadalom 5.0, p 17. Translated by the author.
[172] Bartók – Lovászy – Szigeti: Japán: Társadalom 5.0, p 17. Translated by the author.
[173] Bartók – Lovászy – Szigeti: Japán: Társadalom 5.0, p 39. Translated by the author. Linguists once suggested that Japanese might belong to the Altaic language family, which includes Turkish, Mongolic, and others. However, this idea has been rejected. The notion that Japanese and Hungarian could be distantly related through this group is speculative and not supported by current research.

For instance, their best explanation behind the comparability between King Stephen I. of Hungary (King Saint Stephen) and Prince Shōtoku is that "*both carried out basic, state-defining measures*".[174] They are so intent on making their pseudo-comparisons work that they end up randomly and haphazardly connecting Hungarian products, historical persons with anything that is allegedly 'similar' on the Japanese side. In this kaleidoscopically diverse frenzy of haphazard comparisons, Hungarian author and inventor Kempelen Farkas's chess-playing automaton hoax, 'The Turk' is compared to Japan's "first robotic dolls"; Nariakira Shimazu, a mid-19th century Japanese daimyo is compared to Count Ferenc Széchényi, a Hungarian nobleman and statesman; Tomomi Iwakura, a Japanese statesman is compared to Ferenc Deák, a Hungarian statesman; Japanese anime is compared to the Hungarian animated fantasy adventure film *Son of the White Mare* (Hungarian: Fehérlófia) directed by Marcell Jankovics; origami is compared to the Rubik's Cube; the Fukushima nuclear accident of 2011 is compared to the Hungarian red mud disaster of 2010; and, probably (ideologically) most importantly, Viktor Orbán is compared to Shinzo Abe at the end of the book. Still, the more comparisons they come up with, the more shallow and meaningless the comparisons become. We can also find traces of a Hungarian ethnocentric ego trip in statements where the authors insist that Hungarians were almost always regarded positively and that their authority was consistently honored and respected by other countries throughout history.[175] Since a thorough analysis would require a separate book, let's examine the political-ideological reality behind the publication of *Japan: Society 5.0 – From the Historical Past to the Superintelligent Future, in the Mirror of Hungarian History*. It is essentially a piece of mediocre ethnocentrism, cloaked in pseudo-comparativitity and pseudo-science. The goal appears to be to boost the battered Hungarian national ego and to provide full endorsement of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his political-ideological system, called "NER".[176] This is achieved through unrealistic and unfounded 'comparisons' or

[174] Bartók – Lovászy – Szigeti: Japán: Társadalom 5.0, p 52. Translated by the author.
[175] Bartók – Lovászy – Szigeti: Japán: Társadalom 5.0, p 59. Translated by the author.
[176] NER is short for "Nemzeti Együttműködés Rendszere", meaning "System of National Cooperation". The term was coined by the Orbán government after their election victory in 2010 to refer to the changes in government that they were about to introduce. By 2025, NER has become a term in its own right, used in colloquial Hungarian to refer to Fidesz's governing elite, including right-wing media organizations, think tanks, oligarchs, politicians, academics, theorists, thinkers, and influencers who profit from the system. Hungarian Sociologist Ferenc Krémer considers it a "state organized political crime". See: Ferenc Krémer: NER – the state organized political crime, Academia.edu, 2021.

alleged connections with Japan (and ‘things Japanese’) that are, in reality: shallow, rather empty and meaningless. These comparisons appear to have a distinct goal: to glorify Hungary's past, present, and future by portraying them as equal to, or even surpassing Japan’s achievements. (Such comparisons are extremely convenient when Japan’s brand is highly praised internationally, as indicated by a recent nation brands index.[177]) The book subtly connects Hungary's and Japan's futures, tapping into how Japan envisions its shrinking population. Yet, what it fails to recognize is clearly demonstrated in the literature: contemporary Japanese narratives and visualizations construct an imagined shrinking community, reinforcing the idea of a once-glorious and stable nation now facing crisis. As noted by Chigusa Yamaura, these narratives serve the nation-state by framing population decline as a threat to national identity and continuity. The fear of an insufficient number of 'ethnic Japanese' to sustain the nation implies concerns over non-ethnic Japanese filling the void. Ultimately, the presence of non-Japanese is seen as a consequence rather than the cause of demographic decline.[178]

Similar ethnocentric wishful thinking and self-glorification can be seen in a lavishly state-supported project at Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design, called the *Future Potentials Observatory* (FPO). It is noteworthy that the aforementioned ministerial commissioner is involved in this project as a futurologist researcher. Their *invention*, the *Future Potential Index*,[179] was praised by the Hungarian FIDESZ-affiliated English news portal with the headline *Hungary Ahead of Japan, UK, and U.S. in New Ranking of Future Prospects*.[180] Nevertheless, within Hungarian academia, the *Future Potential Index*, along with its methodologies and conclusions, has faced severe criticism, to the extent that it appears closer to crackpot science than to legitimate science.[181] The fact that the results are

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https://www.academia.edu/90211841/Ferenc_Kr%C3%A9mer_NER_the_state_organized_political_crime_1 (accessed: 2025 Jan.)

[177] See: *Nation Brands Index 2023: Japan takes the lead for the first time in NBI history* https://www.ipsos.com/en/nation-brands-index-2023 (accessed: 2024 Aug.)

[178] Chigusa Yamaura: *An Imagined Shrinking Community: Japanese Nationalism and The Chronology of the Future*, Japanese Studies, 2024. Jan. pp. 1-23. DOI: 10.1080/10371397.2023.2298295

[179] according to the authors, “*the holistic concept of future potential expresses the readiness of countries in terms of their ability to preserve a good life for their members in a unity of order through the strategic management of future change*” https://api.mome.hu/uploads/Future_Potential_Index_PPT_5ee60aa904.pdf (accessed: 2024 Aug.)

[180] https://hungarytoday.hu/hungary-ahead-of-japan-uk-and-u-s-in-new-ranking-of-future-prospects/?fbclid=IwAR2DqbN4bgRQIaxTlzddXuQvKayBh2V2PJ8jF2E41kC7HmuDah_pR_cDafs (accessed: 2024 Aug.)

[181] Tomka B. (2022): *Társadalmi jövőképesség mutató a Corvinusról: Észak-Korea jövőképesebb, mint Svájc? (Social Futuring Index from the Corvinus University of Budapest: Is North-Korea More Future-proof than*

promoted in comparison with Japan adds zest to this already thick ideological stew.

From these examples, it is clear that both the Ministerial commissioner-futurologist's book and the Future Potential Index self-servingly capitalize on Japan's overall international popularity, redirecting this admiration toward Orbán's (and the leading ideological circles') idealized vision of Hungary's past, present, and future. In other words, these actors are trying to bathe Hungary in Japan's popularity. It might be useful to reference BIRGing, a psychological term that stands for "Basking In Reflected Glory", which refers to the tendency to enhance one's self-esteem by associating with a successful or prestigious group.[182] Applying a new, slightly altered version of this concept (BIPing: Bathing/Basking In Popularity of the Other), it becomes clear that a similar process is at work, with an imagined Hungary basked in the reflection of Japan's popularity, as promoted by government-loyal, influential academic actors. I define BIP-ing (Bathing/Basking In Popularity of the Other) as a self-serving cognitive process where individuals enhance their self-esteem and self-glory by creating or believing in a narrative that attributes a special connection between themselves (or their group) and a more popular or successful Other. This perceived affiliation or closeness to the Other's popularity is enough to stimulate self-esteem, often relying on pseudoscientific, historical, or cultural claims.

Characteristics of BIP-ing:

- Self-Serving Cognition: The process is motivated by a desire to enhance self-esteem and self-worth.

Switzerland?) Magyar Tudomány, 183, 4, 521–527. DOI: 10.1556/2065.183.2022.4.11, https://mersz.hu/hivatkozas/matud202204_f73795#matud202204_f73795; *Tomka Béla: Valódi válaszokra várva (Still Waiting for Real Answers)* https://mersz.hu/dokumentum/matud64__3?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR3IG9G1VyIdNXJqdhh1F11nyA9Mykw_E8SN22wnbLfZx-px8VE8_W1WX54_aem_ZmFrZWR1bW15MTZieXRlcw (accessed: 2024 Aug.) Apart from providing academic criticism of the index, Béla Tomka, a renowned Hungarian university professor at the University of Szeged, informed me during an informal conversation that he considers the index "*completely worthless"*". He further noted that "*its composition was apparently manipulated based on non-scientific (political) considerations. (...) Overall, the indicator still favors authoritarian states with low population density, muddled by a few aspects particularly beneficial for Hungary. From the perspective of national and social self-awareness, it is especially harmful if we create and spread a distorted image of ourselves. It is particularly concerning if this is done with extravagantly large sums of state money"*. (Mr. Tomka, in an email conversation from February 2024). The project has received financial support from the Hungarian state through various channels. It can be estimated that this support amounts to several million USD.

[182] https://dictionary.apa.org/basking-in-reflected-glory (accessed: 2024 Aug.); Cialdini, R. B., Borden, R. J., Thorne, A., Walker, M. R., Freeman, S., & Sloan, L. R. (1976). Basking in reflected glory: Three (football) field studies. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 34(3), 366–375. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.34.3.366

- Self-Glory: The individual or group feels a sense of pride and elevated status by associating with the perceived popularity of another.
- Narrative Creation: Often involves creating or believing in a narrative of connection, regardless of the factual accuracy.
- Pseudoscientific or Historical Claims: Frequently relies on dubious scientific, historical, or cultural claims to establish the perceived connection.

Examples of BIP-ing:

- Pseudoscientific Linguistic Theories: An individual asserts that their lesser-known language has significant historical ties to a widely recognized and prestigious language, enhancing their sense of cultural pride.
- Genetic and/or Historical Claims: A person believes and promotes the idea that their ancestry is directly connected to a famous historical civilization, despite a lack of credible evidence, to boost their self-image and group status.
- Cultural Affiliation: A group claims cultural practices or heritage that they argue are linked to a more popular and respected culture, thereby basking in the reflected glory of that culture's achievements and recognition.

We can further broaden the meaning of BIP-ing when it is used in a politically colored pseudo-comparative textual environment to support certain ideologies. I call it “Ideologically Infused Pseudo-Comparative Self-Glorification”, which is a process where ideologically heavily biased individuals (politicians, theorists, strategists, ideologically inclined academics) are trying to enhance their in-group’s self-esteem by making pseudo-comparative claims that their nation, language, or culture shares similarities or connections with a more popular and esteemed nation or language. This approach involves dubious or exaggerated comparisons and relies on the exceptionally positive image of the other nation to boost one's in-group’s own self-image.

Characteristics of Ideologically Infused Pseudo-Comparative Self-Glorification:

- National Self-Esteem Enhancement: The primary motivation is to boost national self-esteem and individual self-worth of a given ideological circle. Comparisons are made between one's own nation, language, or culture and a more popular or respected one, often using questionable, empty or exaggerated claims.
- Borrowed Prestige: The positive image and prestige of the compared nation or language are used to create a sense of pride and elevated status.
- Dubious Claims: Often involves pseudoscientific historical, or cultural claims that lack robust evidence.

In both *BIP*ing and *Ideologically Infused Pseudo-Comparative Self-Glorification*, the

basis for comparison is either non-existent or misleading, with the primary intention of proving that Nation/Country A is just as good as (or even better sometimes than) Nation/Country B. These narratives can also be described using certain psychological terms, such as “illusory superiority” or “national narcissism”. Illusory superiority refers to the cognitive bias where individuals overestimate their own qualities and abilities relative to others. In a geopolitical context, this bias can manifest when leaders or strategists of a country create an unfounded comparison with a more successful nation to boost national pride and self-esteem, despite lacking any real basis for the comparison. The concept of national narcissism extends illusory superiority to a collective level. National narcissism is a form of collective narcissism – the defensive belief in the greatness of one's in-group that requires external validation.[183] This phenomenon involves leaders or strategists of a country holding an inflated view of their nation's importance and status, often disregarding or minimizing factual disparities with other nations. It is characterized by a strong need for external validation and recognition, an unrealistic perception of the nation's strengths and achievements, and is particularly prevalent among right-leaning individuals.[184] Several motivations drive this behavior. One motivation is ideological manipulation, where pseudo-comparisons are used as a propaganda tool to influence public perception. By asserting that their nation is on par with a more advanced country, they aim to foster national unity and pride, even if the claims lack substance. Creating false equivalencies can also serve as a strategy to deflect criticism. By convincing the populace that their country is just as good as a leading nation, leaders and government-affiliated thinkers can distract from domestic issues and policy failures. On the global stage, pseudo-comparisons might be employed to gain diplomatic leverage or project an image of strength and competitiveness, even when the underlying realities do not support such claims. Governments may emphasize cultural or ideological similarities with a prosperous nation to assert equal standing, ignoring significant differences in societal

[183] de Zavala, A. G., Cichocka, A., Eidelson, R., & Jayawickreme, N. (2009). *Collective narcissism and its social consequences.* Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 97(6), 1074–1096. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016904; see also: Cislak, A., Cichocka, A: *National narcissism in politics and public understanding of science.* Nat Rev Psychol 2, 740–750 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-023-00240-6; Further reading on the role of collective narcissism in Hungary: Dorottya Lantos, Joseph P. Forgas: *The role of collective narcissism in populist attitudes and the collapse of democracy in Hungary.* In: Journal of Theoretical Social Psychology 2021;5. pp. 65–78.

[184] Maglić, M., Pavlović, T., & Franc, R. (2024). *Making Nations Great Again: National Narcissism and the Left, the Right, and the Extreme in the European Context*. International Review of Social Psychology, 37(1): 2, 1–15. DOI: https://doi. org/10.5334/irsp.844

development or governance. When leaders and government strategists engage in pseudo-comparisons to assert that their nation is as successful as a much more advanced one, despite lacking a real basis for such claims, they are engaging in a form of national self-deception driven by illusory superiority or national narcissism. While this behavior may serve immediate political goals, it carries significant risks, particularly concerning domestic common thinking and public opinion, and may contribute to an overall cognitive decline.

Japanese-style Turanist folding screen, decorated with scenes from the Hun-Hungarian mythological narrative and a depiction of Attila's death; designed by Károly Kós, circa 1909 (Iparművészeti Múzeum)

The Orbán regime's Like-Hunting in Hungarian Media Using "things Japanese"

Throughout the years when the Orbán cabinet was in power (1: 1998–2002; 2: 2010–2014; 3: 2014–2018; 4: 2018–2022; 5: 2022–present), they learned how to use the media to serve their interests. As early as 2006, a Hungarian lawyer, Tamás Sárközy (a distant relative of French President Nicolas Sarkozy), who led the State Reform Committee of the second left-wing Gyurcsány cabinet at that time, lamented that the first Orbán cabinet was a "media-government", meaning that they

could effectively use the media for their own benefit.[185] Later on, even professional work was supplanted by communication tactics, allowing the Orbán regime to dominate the momentum and almost any kind of discourse on a broader and deeper level. Let's examine two instances where Orbán's mediatization involved Japanese cultural elements.

In 2014, a short Japanese manga *Bar:Mangalica* was published with the support of the Hungarian Government and *Pick*, a famous Hungarian salami producer and exporter of Hungarian mangalica[186] to Japan at that time. The background of the story is that Japanese manga artist Ms. Torino Matsumoto started her web-manga series バー:マンガリッツァ (Bar: Mangalitza) online, and the idea of publishing it for promotional purposes was taken up by *Pick*'s Tokyo branch. Shortly afterward, the manga artist was invited to Budapest for a VIP tour and to meet Viktor Orbán, who presented her with a plush mangalica toy, as shown in a television spot aired on May 16, 2014, on TV2 in Hungary.[187] The visit was widely reported in various Hungarian media outlets. There is also a recording of a short press conference from 2014, featuring Ms. Matsumoto, which is still available on the official YouTube channel of the Government of Hungary. The video is titled *The Native Hungarian Pig Has Become a Japanese Anime Hero (Japán animehős lett a magyar őshonos sertés)*.[188] While the Mangalica story cannot be considered a viral media hit, and it is unknown if and how this action helped the export of Hungarian mangalica meat to Japan, nine years later in 2023, during the heyday of social media platforms, the Hungarian government changed gears and created a Japan-related popular meme on Viktor Orbán's TikTok account.[189] The meme was generated using artificial intelligence, depicting Orbán and members of his government as *ninja warriors* after Orbán described the Hungarian government as a *ninja government* in one of his speeches:

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[185] Sárközy Tamás: *Javaslat a kormányzati struktúra átalakítására*, MKKSZ Hírlevél, 2005. Április, p. 6. https://www.mkksz.org.hu/html/main/hirlevel/2005/mkksz-hirlevel200502aprilis.pdf (accessed: 2024 Aug.)
[186] a breed of domestic pig known for its particularly flavorful meat
[187] It is evident that both Orbán and Ms. Matsumoto felt somewhat awkward and uncomfortable during their brief encounter: https://tv2play.hu/aktiv/orban-viktor-plussfigurat-ajandekozott-a-japan-muvesznek (accessed: 2024 Aug.) Apart from this video, the Hungary tour is well documented on the 'Mangalitsa Tour in Hungary / 松本さんのハンガリー マンガリッツァ旅行' Facebook page. https://www.facebook.com/mangalicatourinhungary/?locale=ja_JP (accessed: 2024 Aug.)
[188] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5PbKnUa4bc (accessed: 2024 Aug.)
[189] https://www.tiktok.com/@viktor_a_tiktokon/video/7303946873801362720?lang=hu-HU (accessed: 2024 Aug.)

> "*Let's get back to earth before we get dizzy. In the coming months – right up until the European elections – we face major political struggles. There will be budget debates in Brussels. It will also be our task to correct the misguided promise to Ukraine to start accession negotiations – as now Ukraine is light years away from the European Union. We must also prevent the resettlement of migrants in Hungary and the adoption of a rule forcing Hungary to set up migrant ghettos. Overwhelming numbers everywhere, on every front. In 1990, opposition less powerful than this was enough to make the first democratic government after communism declare itself a "kamikaze government". They would do what they must, they said, but they would not survive. We are of different mettle. I have a different attitude. Our government is a ninja government. Our plan is that after the encounter it will be the enemy, not us, who are left on the ground, while we return to base, safe and sound. What a difference! Of course a ninja government must be courageous and capable of action, must not shy away from unexpected manoeuvres, and must know that against a much stronger enemy success can only be won with disciplined action and precise operations. The throwing star must be thrown at the right time and in the right place. There will be no second chance.*"[190]

Orbán's ninja-metaphor has a predecessor, as himself has referred to it as well. At the dawn of the regime change in 1990, anticipating unforeseen difficulties, incoming Prime Minister József Antall warned his ministers at the first government meeting: "*You are participating in a kamikaze government*".[191] However, it is indisputable that the Western (mis-)conception and (mis-)understanding of Japanese ninjas came in handy for Orbán, who, in his speeches analyzed by Hungarian researchers, likes to strike a military tone.[192] One of the main words he has been using in his speeches since 2014 is "fight" or words and expressions related to fighting.[193] Over the past 30 years in Hungarian politics, Viktor Orbán has played a crucial role in shaping public discourse, by being a "*key meaning-making figure*".[194] Since becoming Prime Minister in 2010, he has effectively maintained

190 https://miniszterelnok.hu/en/speech-by-prime-minister-viktor-orban-at-the-30th-congress-of-the-fidesz-hungarian-civic-alliance/ (accessed: 2024 Aug.)

191 https://index.hu/nagykep/2013/12/12/antall_jozsef/ (accessed: 2024 Aug.)

192 Peter Dlhopolec, Edit Inotai, Tim Gosling, Claudia Ciobanu: *Democracy Digest: Hungary Promotes 'Ninja Government'* November 24, 2023, https://balkaninsight.com/2023/11/24/democracy-digest-hungary-promotes-ninja-government/ (accessed: 2024 Aug.)

193 Magyar Hajnalka, Gulyás István, Kovács János, Világosi Emma: *Van egy magyar Magyarország* 2018. https://ia803100.us.archive.org/35/items/161189wA180616_201807/161189w_a_180616.pdf (accessed: 2024 Aug.); *A harc és béke szavak előfordulása Orbán Viktor beszédeiben – A beszéd összes szavának százalékában, 2007-2022* https://www.szabadeuropa.hu/a/31757984.html (accessed: 2024 Aug.)

194 Palonen, E. (2018). P*erforming the nation: The Janus-faced populist foundations of illiberalism in Hungary*. Journal of Contemporary European Studies, 26(3), 308–321. https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2018.1498776

power by constantly inventing new enemies, both domestic and international, for the government and the populace to oppose. These adversaries have included Brussels, George Soros, the EU, critical media, NGOs, and opposition parties[195] – but never Japan. If we look at ambassadorial summonings – which can sometimes be quite harsh, with it being used in Hungary lately as a political tool against Ukraine, Germany, Croatia, and the United States – there is no indication that the Japanese ambassador has ever been summoned.[196]

Japan as an Export Destination for the "Hungarian Model"

As Hungary becomes isolated from the liberal-democratic part of the EU due to its foreign policy,[197] an interesting political export concept emerges in certain American and Japanese neoconservative alternative and social media outlets, starting from 2018. This concept involves the propaganda export of Hungary's family and migration policies, essentially exporting a so-called 'Hungarian model'.[198]

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[195] Krekó, P., & Enyedi, Z. (2018). *Explaining Eastern Europe: Orbán's laboratory of illiberalism*. Journal of Democracy, 29(3), 39–51. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2018.0043

[196] Most of the time, the Hungarian foreign ministry uses summoning diplomats as a PR move. Ambassadors are most often summoned in response to criticism of the Orbán government. https://hvg.hu/itthon/20200824_szijjarto_peter_kulugyminiszterium_nagykovetek_bekeretese_diplomacia_balazs_peter. In 2024, Belarus, China, Korea, and Israel summoned Japanese ambassadors. Belarus summoned Japan's envoy over suspected Japanese intelligence agent 2024 september (https://www.reuters.com/world/belarus-says-it-summoned-japans-envoy-over-suspected-japanese-intelligence-agent-2024-09-06/); China summoned Japanese diplomats to express dissatisfaction over negative comments about it (https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/china-summons-japanese-diplomat-over-negative-comments-summit-2024-04-12/); Korean Foreign Ministry summoned Japanese diplomats over Dokdo event (https://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/2024-02-22/national/diplomacy/Foreign-Ministry-gives-Japanese-ambassador-a-talking-to-over-Takeshima-Day-event/1986851); Israel summoned Japanese ambassador over support for Palestine UN membership (https://www.thenationalnews.com/news/mena/2024/04/21/israel-summons-ambassadors-over-support-for-palestine-un-membership/). Certain tensions rose in August 2024, following the renewed Israeli-Palestinian conflict in October 2023: ambassadors from the U.S., Britain, France, and other EU nations did not attend the official commemoration of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki on August 9th, in protest of the exclusion of Israeli officials. (https://www.politico.eu/article/nagasaki-memorial-ceremony-centre-stage-geopolitics-israel/). (Links accessed: 2024 Sept.)

[197] See: a Heinrich Böll Stiftung analysis from 2023 January: Edit Zgut-Przybylska: *Visegrad shaken to its core, Hungary in isolation* https://cz.boell.org/en/2023/01/09/visegrad-shaken-its-core-hungary-isolation (accessed: 2023 Aug); While the isolation from the liberal part of the EU is deepening, Orbán has reorganized Europe's far right around his own image and that of his Fidesz party. https://www.politico.eu/article/viktor-orban-not-isolated-as-you-think/?fbclid=IwY2xjawEehhdleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHcCrtw5aEMIpQZQrZxFvM4jX80zDypk_NZ5u7GdPL5e6u8Yn9OTGuRUoNQ_aem_8h6NWE9NNIlP5ast5lkUYA (accessed: 2024 Aug.)

[198] *The Flight of the Bumblebee: A Review of 'The Hungarian Way of Strategy'*, Hungarian Conservative online https://www.hungarianconservative.com/articles/reviews/the-flight-of-the-bumblebee-a-review-of-the-hungarian-way-of-strategy/; Christina Griessler, Fanni Elek: *Hungary, an anti-role model for successful EU integration?* ÖGfE Policy Brief 14'2021 Vienna, 22 October 2021 https://www.andrassyuni.eu/docfile/de-3512-pb-142021-1.pdf (accessed: 2023 Aug.)

The narrative strongly emphasizes Hungary's ethnocentric exceptionalism and positions it as a model country with a mission that is somewhat reminiscent of that of the United States.[199] In an interview, Dr. Kevin Roberts, president of the Washington-based Heritage Foundation – one of America's oldest conservative think tanks – stated the following in 2022:

> "*Modern Hungary is not just a model for conservative statecraft, but the model. Americans, Brits, Spaniards, Australians – everyone – can and should learn from it. And by the way, I think we will, as The Heritage Foundation will be a major advocate of it on both sides of the Atlantic*".[200]

This rhetoric is also observed in some Japanese online alternative media channels, garnering mixed popularity.[201] For example, Ms. Akane Yamanoi, a seasoned expert on Hungary's policies at Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting, argued that Hungary's family policy is being discussed on Japanese Twitter "*not so much for the purpose of praising it, but rather as mere buzz content".*[202] If we wish to understand the question of how receptive the Japanese society is to the export of Hungarian family policy, and other political propaganda, we can find part of the answer in the latest edition of the Inglehart-Welzel World Cultural Map – specifically, the World Values Survey 7 released in 2023. When comparing Japanese values to Hungarian values, Japan tends to exhibit a more secular-rational orientation. This is generally characterized by a diminished emphasis on religious beliefs, traditional family values, and authoritative structures. As a result, concepts such as divorce, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide are relatively more acceptable in this context. Japanese

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[199] Even more significant background political export activity can be observed in Europe with the rapid expansion of Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC), a private university profusely funded by the Hungarian government. In 2020, it received over £1.3 billion in state funds and assets. MCC currently operates not only in Budapest but also in Vienna, Brussels, London, and elsewhere. The curriculum of MCC is shaped by young Orbán-sympathising scholars and future leaders. Some assert that MCC is disseminating Orbán's populist philosophy across Europe, with the aim of establishing a global "deep state" that solidifies his legacy. Despite the college's leadership portraying it as a diverse space for conservative students to engage in debates without the fear of being "cancelled," some former students argue that its primary goal is to indoctrinate young people into Orbán-friendly views within and outside of Hungary. Flora Garamvolgyi and Peter Walker: *Viktor Orbán-influenced university plans outpost in London*; Article in Guardian, 28 Aug 2023 https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/aug/28/viktor-orban-influenced-university-plans-outpost-in-london (accessed: 2023 Aug.)

[200] https://www.hungarianconservative.com/articles/2022/12/05/ (accessed: 2025 Jan.)

[201] Videos of Hungarian speeches at CPAC Japan 2022 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kV9SFfguqLY, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PlpW7HeR53o; 国家を守るハンガリーの戦い: an alternative neoconservative JP online media interview with a representative of the Center for Fundamental Rights: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrtDkopsuEQ (all links accessed: 2023 Aug.)

[202] Tweet by @noicska "日本のTwitterにおけるハンガリーの家族政策はそれ自体をすごいと礼賛するよりも、単なるバズコンテンツとして消費されている気がする" https://twitter.com/noicska/status/1618960878698905607; 2023/1/27.(accessed: 2023 Aug.) Translated by the author.

values lean towards a greater emphasis on self-expression. This orientation prioritizes areas such as environmental conservation and an increasing acceptance of foreigners, as well as individuals from the LGBTQ+ community. Additionally, there's an emphasis on promoting gender equality and an amplified desire for active involvement in economic and political decision-making processes. In comparison, Hungarians tend to embrace a more traditional value system. This is generally characterized by the significance attributed to religious beliefs, parent-child relationships, and respect for authority. Traditional family values are highly valued, and practices such as divorce, abortion, euthanasia, and suicide are typically met with disapproval. Additionally, there is a notable sense of national pride and a strong inclination towards a nationalist perspective. Hungarian values lean towards a greater emphasis on survival values. This orientation underscores the importance of economic and physical security. A relatively ethnocentric approach is observed, often accompanied by a lower level of trust and tolerance towards outsiders.

Postcard from 1903 (Hopp Múzeum)

Japan Rates, Hungary Celebrates: The Hungarian Media's Fascination with Japanese Credit Ratings

First, it is important to understand what a “country credit rating” is. As defined by Investopedia, it is an “*independent assessment of the creditworthiness of a country or sovereign entity. Sovereign credit ratings can give investors insights into the level of risk associated with investing in the debt of a particular country, including any political risk. At the request of the country, a credit rating agency will evaluate its economic and political environment to assign it a rating. Obtaining a good sovereign credit rating is usually essential for developing countries that want access to funding in international bond markets.*”[203] A research paper from the IMF[204] discusses several key criticisms of sovereign credit ratings provided by credit rating agencies (CRAs). First, it points out that CRAs often smooth their ratings to avoid volatility, which can lead to sudden and destabilizing downgrades during financial downturns, thereby exacerbating market instability. Second, the paper highlights that sovereign ratings are frequently misinterpreted as precise measures of credit risk, such as default probabilities, rather than as ordinal rankings. This misinterpretation can result in inaccurate risk assessments and regulatory decisions. The agencies were criticized for creating potential conflicts of interest by following an "issuer pays" model, in which nations pay the agencies to rate them.[205] This model may incentivize CRAs to provide favorable ratings to secure future business, leading to biased ratings. Lastly, the paper calls for greater transparency in the rating methodologies and data used by CRAs to ensure more accurate and unbiased ratings. It suggests rethinking regulations that mandate automatic buy or sell decisions based on ratings to reduce the negative impact of rating changes. Before 2009, Japanese credit rating agencies were recognized, and their ratings were used in the European Union, but there was no unified regulatory framework governing their oversight. This lack of formal regulation meant that the recognition of these agencies and the quality of their ratings were not subject to consistent standards or rigorous scrutiny. After 2009, with the introduction of additional

[203] https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/sovereign-credit-rating.asp (accessed: 2024 Aug.)
[204] International Monetary Fund (October 2010). *The Uses and Abuses of Sovereign Credit Rating. Global Financial Stability Report*. Published by the International Monetary Fund http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/gfsr/2010/02/pdf/chap3.pdf (accessed: 2024 April)
[205] https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/credit-rating-controversy (accessed: 2024 April)

regulations in 2013 and 2019 (Regulation (EU) No. 462/2013 and Regulation (EU) No. 2019/1988), Japanese credit rating agencies were subject to a more structured and rigorous regulatory framework in the EU. They were required to comply with stringent standards for transparency, accountability, and oversight, which significantly improved the reliability and stability of credit ratings within the European financial system. The *Japan Credit Rating Agency Ltd*. (JCR) consistently rated Hungary higher than S&P and Moody's, suggesting a more optimistic view of the country's creditworthiness.[206] A partial explanation and insight into the rating difference is discussed in a paper from 1997:

> "*Another concern cited by many observers is the fact that investors may not fully appreciate the risk of the Samurai issues because Japanese rating agencies rate samurai bonds higher than U.S. agencies. Indeed, a comparison of the Japanese and U.S. ratings of specific samurai bonds reveals very large differences between the two sets of ratings. The National Bank of Hungary, one of the more frequent issuers in the samurai market, earned a rating of Ba1/BB+ from Moody's/Standard and Poor's during 1995 and 1996, but it received a rating of BBB+ – a full three notches higher – from the Japan Credit Rating Agency. (...) These differences are not as unexpected as they may seem at first glance; Japanese credit rating agencies also rate domestic borrowers much higher on average than Moody's and Standard and Poor's. Because of the persistent nature of the ratings differences, and the fact that Japanese regulatory authorities have eliminated the use of ratings to determine the eligibility of bond issuance, Japanese investors are unlikely to assume that the Japanese agencies' particular letter-grade ratings correspond to the same absolute level of default risk as the ratings of Moody's and Standard and Poor's. More likely, Japanese investors will consider the information provided by Japanese agency ratings about the rank ordering of default risk.*"

In the history of Japanese credit ratings for Hungary, an interesting event occurred in 2009 during the leftist Bajnai government. At that time, the largest Japanese credit rating agency, *Rating and Investment Information Inc.*, downgraded

[206] Frank Packer, Elizabeth Reynolds: *The Samurai Bond Market Current Issues in Economics and Finance.* Research and Market Analysis Group of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, June 1997, Volume 3. Number 8.

Hungary's debt rating from BBB+ to BBB, which led to a sudden and unfavorable change in the HUF-EUR exchange rate.[207] It's noteworthy that the last available official credit rating in August 2024 on the *Rating and Investment Information Inc.* website is from May 2023, where Hungary's Foreign Currency Issuer Rating was BBB+ with a stable outlook.[208] It appears that the Orbán government may be favoring the *Japan Credit Rating Agency Ltd.*, over the largest CRA in Japan, *Rating and Investment Information Inc.*, for some reason. The only year for which ratings from both Japanese credit rating agencies are available on the internet is 2013. In December 2013, *Japan Credit Rating Agency Ltd.* rated Hungary's long-term debt as BBB, while the *Rating and Investment Information Inc.*, rated it one notch lower at BBB–.[209]

Whenever JCR releases a new rating[210] (usually more "optically favorable" than those of other major rating agencies), the Hungarian Minister of Finance immediately shares it on his social media page (typically on Facebook)[211], and it is then heavily promoted in government-affiliated media.[212] In these news texts, the headline typically includes positive phrases like "*Hungary was upgraded…*"' ("*felminősítette Magyarország…*") or "*Hungary was reinforced/reassured…*" ("*megerősítette Magyarország…*"). This allows the Hungarian government to present itself in a better financial and reputational light.

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[207] https://mfor.hu/cikkek/befektetes/Rogton_megerezte_az_ujabb_leminositest_a_forint.html (accessed: 2024 Aug)

[208] https://www.r-i.co.jp/en/news_release_cfp/2023/05/news_release_cfp_20230501_2303300701_eng.pdf (accessed: 2024 Aug.)

[209] https://privatbankar.hu/cikkek/kotveny/nem-konnyu-kijutni-a-bovli-kategoriabol-igy-allunk-1989-ota-264030.html (accessed: 2024 Aug.)

[210] The updated list is available here: https://www.jcr.co.jp/en/ratinglist/sovereign/12038 (accessed: 2024 Aug)

[211] In 2024 October, R&I also released a new rating, which was immediately commented on by Mihály Varga, the Minister of Finance on his Facebook page. *Japanese credit rating agency R&I recommends Hungary for investment* https://www.facebook.com/VargaMihalyKepviselo/videos/1074365610542601 (accessed: 2024 Oct.)

[212] https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/ministry-for-national-economy/news/japanese-credit-rating-agency-jcra-upgrades-hungary-s-foreign-currency-and-forint-debt-ratings;
https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/ministry-for-national-economy/news/the-japan-credit-rating-agency-jcra-raised-hungary-s-credit-rating;
https://hungarytoday.hu/japanese-credit-rating-agency-recommends-hungary-for-investment/

Franz Ferdinand in Japan, dressed in Japanese attire, accompanied by his entourage, 1893

Paper Hussars (b)owing to Paper Samurais: A Joyful Shadow Play Between Debtor and Creditor

One of the earliest signs of the positive financial bond between Hungary and Japan is reflected in the fact that Daiwa Securities Company opened its office in Budapest in 1990, one year after the regime change in Hungary. With this move, they became the first Japanese brokerage in Eastern Europe. Daiwa owned more than 50 percent of a $10 million venture formed with the National Bank of Hungary and the Hungarian Foreign Trade Bank. At that time, Hungary was planning to privatize many companies, and the joint venture was expected to underwrite shares and bonds issued by these companies.[213] It should also be noted that Hungary is considered a historically reliable and punctual debtor in Japan, as Hungarian Samurai Bonds have been popular financial assets since as early as 1984.[214] In the table below, I have compiled a detailed list using the latest available data in early

[213] *Daiwa Office in Budapest*. A New York Times article from July 17, 1990, Section D, Page 6.

[214] A former Japanese ambassador to Hungary in the mid-1990s wrote that one of the three key elements of cooperation between Hungary and Japan was that "*Hungary succeeded in maintaining the confidence of both the Japanese government and private business circles by repaying, as scheduled, the huge debts they owed to Japan under the old socialist regime. When Hungary began transitioning to a new economic system, approximately one-third of its outstanding foreign debt was owed to Japan. (...) the very fact that Hungary did not seek debt relief measures in spite of its serious economic difficulties and stood for a rigorous, self-imposed austerity plan created great confidence and succeeded in obtaining full support both from the government and business and financial circles in Japan.*" Tanaka, Yoshitomo: *Central European Transformations as Seen by a Japanese Diplomat*. In: Democracy and Market Economics in Central and Eastern Europe: Are New Institutions Being Consolidated? Sapporo, 2004., p. 281.

September 2024.[215]

Year	Bond Type	Amount per issuance (JPY billion)	Maturity	Coupon Rate	Financial Entities Involved
2018	Green	30	3 years	0.37%	Daiwa Securities, Nomura Securities, SMBC Nikko Securities
2020	Conventional	22.7	3 years	0.52%	Daiwa Securities, Nomura Securities, SMBC Nikko Securities
2020	Conventional	20	5 years	0.74%	Daiwa Securities, Nomura Securities, SMBC Nikko Securities
2020	Green	15.5	7 years	1.03%	Daiwa Securities, Nomura Securities, SMBC Nikko Securities
2020	Green	4.5	10 years	1.29%	Daiwa Securities, Nomura Securities, SMBC Nikko Securities
2022	Conventional	16	3 years	0.45%	Daiwa Securities (Joint Lead Manager)
2022	Conventional	46.8	5 years	0.73%	Daiwa Securities (Joint Lead Manager)
2022	Green	4.7	7 years	0.91%	Daiwa Securities (Joint Lead Manager)
2022	Green	7.8	10 years	1.15%	Daiwa Securities (Joint Lead Manager)
2024	Conventional	38.3	3 years	1.6%	Mitsubishi UFJ, Morgan Stanley Securities Co., Ltd.,Mizuho Securities Co. Ltd., Nomura Securities Co. Ltd., SMBC Nikko Securities Inc.
2024	Green	1.3	10 years	2.35%	Mitsubishi UFJ, Morgan Stanley Securities Co., Ltd.,Mizuho Securities Co. Ltd., Nomura Securities Co. Ltd., SMBC Nikko Securities Inc.

In 2021, György Matolcsy, the Governor of the National Bank of Hungary, lamented in an essay that the world was facing a debt trap with three possible solutions. The third solution, as Matolcsy saw it, was modeled after Japan, where about half of its public debt, which stood at around 240% of GDP at the time, was on the balance sheet of the Japanese central bank. Matolcsy wrote that, although this third way had not worked previously, it now seems that only this financial strategy can lead major economies out of the global debt trap.[216] One may find it ironic that Japan, with a recent government debt-to-GDP ratio of around 262-264% (the second largest in the world), is helping to finance the debt of Hungary, a country with a much lower debt-to-GDP ratio of 73.5-74.1%.[217] This situation reflects the complex

[215] For data before 2007, see: Boromisza Zsolt: *Japán-Magyar Befektetési Kapcsolatok* 2007, EU Working Papers, 1418-6241 10 4 pp. 17-56. http://epa.niif.hu/00000/00026/00037/pdf/euwp_EPA00026_2007_04_017-057.pdf (accessed: 2024 Sept.)
[216] Matolcsy György: *A japán úton járunk* https://www.mnb.hu/sajtoszoba/elnoki-publikaciok/2021-evi-publikaciok/matolcsy-gyorgy-a-japan-uton-jarunk-100-words-forditas (accessed: 2024 Sept.)
[217] Source of data from ‘22Dec and ‘23Dec: https://tradingeconomics.com/country-list/government-debt-to-gdp (accessed: 2024 Sept.)

dynamics of international finance. Despite Japan's high debt, it remains a wealthy country with a strong currency and a large pool of domestic savings, leading Japanese investors to seek returns abroad, especially given low interest rates at home. Hungarian Samurai Bonds are appealing to Japanese investors as they provide access to foreign markets without currency risk. Additionally, Japan's high debt-to-GDP ratio is considered manageable because most of its debt is domestically held, while countries like Hungary rely more on international investors and foreign currency debt, making access to markets like Japan crucial. Although it may seem counterintuitive, this situation is a result of Japan's economic stability, high savings rates, and investor behavior. This behavior of Japanese investors is one of the main elements in the Hungarian government's future strategic plans, as part of its "Connectivity Strategy",[218] to finance itself from outside the EU, as Orbán himself explained in September 2024:

> "*The new economic policy must be a neutral economic policy. (...) This means that we must resist any kind of bloc system. (...) What is the content of economic neutrality? The first is financial neutrality. (...) We are under constant financial pressure. This means that Brussels and London are not enough for us. We need Qatar, we need Beijing, we need Tokyo.*"[219]

Populist Stew: An Unhealthy Mix of Neo-Turanism and Political Japanophilia

There are right-wing (or far-right) populist elements in Hungarian Political Japanophilia, and it can be attributed to the strong presence of Neo-Turanism in Hungary. Originally, Turanism itself was a nationalist cultural and political movement in the 19th century, used to counter the effects of pan-nationalist ideologies like pan-Germanism and pan-Slavism. Neo-Turanism can be understood as a conspiracy-theoretic narrative and a phenomenon known as "contemporary paganism". When considering Neo-Turanism as a conspiracy theory, it is evident that proponents of Turanian origin myths often define themselves not as part of the mainstream, but as a minority condemned to oppression and deprivation. This

[218] Balázs Orbán: *Connectivity: A Hungarian globalisation strategy.* Commentary on the homepage of the European Council of Foreign Relations, 6 March 2023 https://ecfr.eu/article/connectivity-a-hungarian-globalisation-strategy/ (accessed: 2024 Sept.)
[219] Orbán's speech on Kötcse, 2024/09/09. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jl-0TV-_CKg (accessed: 2024 Sept.)

marginalization is precisely why they are often embedded in conspiracy theory narratives. Conspiracy theories typically (though not exclusively) emerge in marginalized minority opinion groups, accompanied by the belief that the institutional representatives of the majority oppress and persecute them. These theories are populist constructs, based on the juxtaposition of the people and the elite. The Turanian origin myths embedded in these conspiracy theories suggest that the idea of Finno-Ugric linguistic affinity is not only false but is a deliberate construct of dominant international economic and political actors. The further to the right on the political spectrum one looks, the more likely it is to encounter ideas that combine Turanism with conspiratorial notions. The Turanist conspiracy theory claims that the Finno-Ugric origin of Hungarians is a deliberate lie meant to hide their noble origins, with academics acting as agents of powerful forces. Those who reveal the "truth" are persecuted, which reinforces a victim identity. Psychologically, believers gain a sense of importance and chosenness, similar to individual paranoia.[220] The theory also strengthens group cohesion, legitimizes nationalist or far-right movements, and shifts blame for historical suffering onto certain foreign powers, portraying Hungarians as deliberately misrepresented and oppressed. These origin myths, rooted in Eastern conspiracy theories, reflect a nation's "delusions of grandeur": despite seeming small and insignificant, it views itself as the most important in the world.[221] When considering Neo-Turanism as contemporary paganism, we must first define what contemporary paganism entails. Attila Hubbes-László and István Povedák argue that contemporary paganism is a global 'religious' or spiritual movement.[222] Its Western variety is rooted in the spiritual awakening movements that emerged in the second half of the 20th century. In the West, contemporary paganism is a depoliticized phenomenon characterized by its focus on nature and magic, liberal values, an anti-hierarchical stance, a

[220] Paranoids gain a sense of importance by believing the world is focused on them and seeks to harm them. Those who feel insignificant are more prone to such beliefs. While individual paranoia and collective conspiracy theories aren't the same, they share similar thought patterns.

[221] Krekó Péter: *Nagynak lenni múltunk által – mások ellenében. A turanista összeesküvés-elméleti eredetmítoszok szociálpszichológiai háttere*. In.: Okok és Okozat – A Magyar Nyelv Eredetéről Történeti, Szociálpszichológiai és Filozófiai Megközelítésben. Szerk.: Bakró-Nagy Marianne, Gondolat, 2018. pp. 148-154..

[222] Hubbes-László Attila, Povedák István: *Már a múlt sem a régi… Az új magyar mitológia multidiszciplináris elemzése*, Szeged, 2015, p. 11.; It should be noted that even the first known Hungarian Neopagan society (Turáni Egyistenhívők Társasága / Turanic Monotheist Society) emerged from Turanic theories and movements. The society gained popularity, reaching tens of thousands of members in the 1930s. László Attila Hubbes, István Povedák: *Competitive Pasts. Ethno-paganism as a Placebo-effect for Identity Reconstruction Processes in Hungary and Romania.* In: Religiski-filozofiski raksti, XVII/2014. p. 136.

strong feminist orientation, and inclusivity. In contrast, as the authors claim, the Hungarian version of contemporary paganism can be traced back to national awakening and self-determination movements that arose during periods of historical crisis and upheaval. It is more political in nature, leaning towards the radical right-wing and conservative spectrum.[223] At the core of Hungarian contemporary paganism (or Neo-Turanism), are elements of ethnocentrism, exclusivity, and a sense of ethnic superiority. Adding to its complexity, the Hungarian version is considered a syncretic phenomenon that incorporates elements of Christianity. Due to this syncretism, some researchers distinguish the Hungarian version as "ethno-paganism" within the broader global "New Paganism" movements. What is particularly interesting are the motivations behind these discourses: a profound desire for community recognition and appreciation. Present day Neo-Turanism in Hungary still displays strong anti-Western attitudes. The modern origins of this sentiment can be traced back to 2006 and onwards, since Jobbik (a Hungarian political party on the far-right) was highly critical of the international policies of the European Union and the U.S., and considered Hungary to be a victim of the West. A Polish researcher made a strikingly prophetic assumption in 2017 when he wrote: "*Considering the crisis now experienced by the West, we can infer that Turanism may become an ideology more popular in Hungary*".[224] Jobbik's political theorists were among the first ones who catalyzed a Neo-Turanist shift, in which Turanist ideologies slowly started to move from the political and ideological peripheries into the center of the Orbán regime's political power. This shift started in 2006, gained traction in 2010, and by 2024, the ruling right-wing party, Fidesz, had fully adopted it and capitalized on the popular demand behind the movement. This is evident in the lavish government support of KURULTAJ festival, which is a "*tribal assembly of the Hun-Turkic nations*", and considered a "*celebration of the preservation of the ancient traditions*".[225]

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[223] Hubbes-László Attila, Povedák István: *Már a múlt sem a régi… Az új magyar mitológia multidiszciplináris elemzése*, Szeged, 2015, p. 11.

[224] Michał Kowalczyk: *Hungarian Turanism: from the birth of the ideology to modernity – an outline of the problem*. Historia i Polityka, No. 20(27)/2017 pp. 49-63.

[225] The Hungarian-Turanian Foundation, a public benefit organization received approximately 33,000 USD from the government between 2009 and 2012 for their activities. The financial support provided by the Hungarian government almost doubled every year from that point, while the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA – a Turkish governmental body), along with a Turkish company owned by the influential businessman Adnan Polat (who is said to be very close to Viktor Orbán) joined to the line of supporters for the event. In 2019, the Hungarian government gave 1,121,000 USD to the organizers, and this sum continued to rise, peaking in

AZ EREDETI PURGO HATÁSA A JAPÁN-OROSZ HÁBORUBAN
CSAK EREDETI DOBOZBAN KAPHATÓ. — ÓVAKODJUNK AZ UTÁNZATOKTÓL.
JÓIZŰ, BIZTOS, LEGENYHÉBB, MEGBIZHATÓ.
„Az egész világ legelőkelőbb orvostanárai ajánlják és naponta rendelik“

A humorous postcard about the effects of Purgo laxative in the Russo-Japanese War (Zempléni Múzeum)

Let's examine a few statements from recent decades (and an interesting one from 1932) in which traces of political Japanophilia and Neo-Turanism coexist.

> "*The DNA of the human race has 2 to 3 twists per unit length, while the Hungarians (and the Japanese, with whom we are distant relatives) have 9, which is equal to the number of twists of light coming from Sirius to Earth. From this also derives the Hungarian mind, soul, spirit, exclusivity and cosmic origin…*" (2000, a late Hungarian politician, and legal officer, László Grespik, in a widely read article)[226]

> "*We are proud to have come from Asia. There are small red dots on the bottoms of our young children in 30 out of 100 cases for six weeks, just like on the bottoms of Japanese babies*" (2012, György Matolcsy, a Hungarian politician and economist, governor of the Hungarian National Bank, in a public speech)[227]

2024, when financial support reached a record high at 1,962,000 USD. Source: *Eltagadott igazság – Tények és hazugságok a magyarság őstörténetéről.* Válasz Offline Bookazine No 2. 2024/1. pp. 11-23.

[226] Dr. Grespik László: *A finnugor-elmélet hazudik, Werbőczy István nem*. Magyar Demokrata, 1999/51., 52., 2000/1. https://nemzetiegyseg.com/Tortenelmi_alkotmanyossag/Hagyatek/Grespik_A_finnugor-elmelet_hazudik_Werboczy_Istvan_nem.pdf (accessed: 2024 Sept.)

[227] https://www.origo.hu/gazdasag/20121116-matolcsy-gyorgy-kisgyermekeink-feneken-kis-piros-pont-van-buszkek-vagyunk.html (accessed: 2024 Sept.)

"*Moses had two sons: one was Japanese, and the other was Hungarian. In any case, the Hungarians are welcomed by the Japanese with cordial, cousinly affection.*" (2014, József Peking Szabó, a Hungarian journalist in a public lecture)[228]

"*There is a sense of ancestral belonging that tends to be remembered in Japan too.*" (2019, Dávid Szabó, a foreign relations expert and former director of the FIDESZ-related political think tank 'Századvég Alapítvány')[229]

"*There is a general sympathy for the Japanese in Hungarians, due in part to the genetic similarities between the two peoples.*" (2021, Tibor Navracsics, a leading Hungarian politician, former EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sports, in an interview)[230]

"*Why is it that we Hungarians can feel good in a space created by a Japanese mind? Perhaps because the distance between the two peoples – the two spirits, the Japanese and the Hungarian genius – is not as wide as we might think, based on geography. (...) Let us just remember the scientific efforts of kinship research in the 1930's!*" (2022, Viktor Orbán, Hungarian Prime Minister, in a public speech on the occasion of opening of the House of Music, which was created by a Japanese architect)[231]

"*Us, Hungarians and Japanese share more than we would think. There has been a theory, more like a legend, saying that our peoples are ancestrally related. As it is a CPAC event, if I may be slightly politically incorrect, this is something less obvious, when we look at each other. But, they did claim that we all originated in Central Asia (...) your forefathers settled in this island of Japan, while ours went to Europe, making Hungary the Western-most, while Japan the Eastern-most Eastern state. Regardless of whether this is true or not, we are both old nation states, we both cherish traditional values, the identity of our communities and our cultural heritage.*" (2022, CPAC Tokyo, Balázs Orbán, the Political Director of the Hungarian Prime Minister)[232]

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228 https://esztergomieletkepek.blog.hu/2014/03/14/magyar-hun_rokonsag_keleten_tavol-kelet_kozelrol_p_szabo_jozsef_eloadasa (accessed: 2024 Sept.)

229 https://mediaklikk.hu/kulfold/video/2019/12/06/150-evesek-a-japan-magyar-diplomaciai-kapcsolatok/ (unavailable link from 2022)

230 https://mandiner.hu/cikk/20210223_japan_magyarorszag_fujisaki_navracsics?fbclid=IwAR2plHbbv1pFeTUnFBldJQ2y7A6CAIoGyqvtlb-CC_9nYmIW68rr0ZNxfxY (accessed: 2024 Sept.)

231 https://kormany.hu/beszedek-interjuk/miniszterelnok/orban-viktor-beszede-a-magyar-zene-hazanak-megnyitasan (accessed: 2024 Sept.)

232 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5OcnAH97r0c (accessed: 2024 Sept.)

"*The Japanese regard the Hungarians as a kindred people, and they generally sympathise with the Hungarians because of their common historical links.*" (2024, Official page of the Hungarian Embassy, Tokyo)[233]

"*It was said as early as 1932: anyone who works against or does not care about Japanese kinship is sinning against the homeland.*" (1932, a Hungarian article published in a Transylvanian journal)[234]

Advertising fan featuring Japanese geishas, Weisz Department Store, Budapest, 1900 (Magyar Kereskedelmi és Vendéglátóipari Múzeum)

Of course, alongside the Japanophile accord, there are minor voices in the chorus that sing out of tune, as well as events that do not align with the Orbán regime's narratives, either revealing inconvenient discrepancies beneath the thickly woven Japanophile attitude or providing different perspectives on Japan or the Japanese. (Interestingly, even when some of these sentiments are Japanophobic, they still reinforce the Hungarian government's broader narratives, albeit from a different perspective.) Firstly, we should mention one of the most surreal debates in Hungarian politics, which took place between two Hungarian-Japanese politicians in 2019. Simon Song, a Fidesz candidate for a municipal council with a Hungarian mother and a Japanese father, posted astonishingly blatant anti-immigrant texts and photos on his Facebook page. This sparked a response from Jun Miyazaki, a

[233] https://tokio.mfa.gov.hu/page/hasznos-informaciok-a-japanba-toertenoe-utazashoz (accessed: 2024 Sept.)
[234] Hargitaváralja, 1932, IV. évf. 2. szám

local councillor in Budapest from the *Demokratikus Koalíció* party, who was born in Hungary to a Hungarian mother and a Japanese father. A surreal communication war broke out between the two, which was widely covered in the Hungarian press and quickly went viral.[235] Further awkward and politically charged episodes involving Japanese individuals in Hungary followed. From the perspective of the Orbán regime, a politically and ideologically highly embarrassing case gained attention in 2025 concerning George Suzuki, a young Japanese assistant to the Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Hilarion (Grigory Valerievich Alfeyev), who worked with him in Budapest between roughly 2022 and 2025 and subsequently accused him of sexual harassment and abuse, supporting his claims with audio and video recordings. The case received wider international attention and reportedly led to internal consequences within the Russian Orthodox Church, including Hilarion's removal from his Budapest post.

A shunga woodblock print from around 1904–1905[236]

In 2021, a particularly striking opinion was voiced by a Hungarian professor and scientific advisor affiliated with a government-related political think tank.[237]

235

https://444.hu/2019/09/03/miyazaki-a-dk-japan-magyar-jeloltje-turult-es-kumiszt-emlegetve-tamadta-meg-songot-a-fidesz-japan-magyar-jeloltjet (accessed: 2025 Feb.)

236 [Russian:] (in Romanised script with katakana glosses) "I think I'm going to die!" (Watakushi mō shinisō desu) [Japanese soldier:] "I'll soon deliver the final blow…" (Sugu todome o sashite yarō) [Russian:] "Quick, let's run away!" (Hayaku nigero)

237 In 2024, Gulyás was affiliated with the István Fekete Free University of "Mi Hazánk", a far-right party in Hungary.

> "*(...) the Japanese isolationist behaviour has led to inbreeding, and this has turned the inhabitants into degenerates, which is also manifested in creativity.*" (2021, a racist remark by László Gulyás, scientific advisor to the *Institute of Hungarian Research*,[238] a government-funded think-tank established for the research of "Hungarianness")

His views sparked a scandal at the University of Szeged, where he was employed as a historian at the Faculty of Pedagogy.[239] (Prior to the scandal, he had been awarded the civilian branch of the Knight's Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit on March 15, 2021.) In our next example, a rather unusual viewpoint was presented in a televised interview in 2023 with a well-known Hungarian Sinologist, who became a public figure in the 2020s:

> *"In fact, Japan is a country that is occupied by the Americans."* (2023 November, Gergely Salát, *Head of the Department of Chinese Studies at Péter Pázmány Catholic University* and Senior Research Fellow at the government-affiliated think tank, the *Hungarian Institute of International Affairs*)[240]

Needless to say, the claim that Japan is occupied by the United States is incorrect and not supported by any factual basis. After World War II, Japan was occupied by Allied forces, primarily led by the U.S., from 1945 to 1952. During this period, the U.S. played a significant role in restructuring Japan's political, economic, and social systems. In fact, the occupation officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of San Francisco in 1951, which came into effect in 1952. Since then, Japan has been a sovereign nation. Although the U.S. maintains military bases in Japan as part of a mutual security treaty, Japan is not occupied by the U.S.; rather, it has a defense agreement that benefits both countries. Japan is an independent, democratic country with its own government, legal system, and policies. The presence of U.S. military bases in Japan is based on bilateral agreements for mutual defense and cooperation, rather than any form of occupation. It is clear that Salát describes Japan as "occupied" for ideological or political reasons, emphasizing national sovereignty and expressing anti-American sentiment. His claims serve as rhetorical tools to support broader geopolitical narratives, even though they conflict with established legal and historical definitions. In 2024 July, Viktor Orbán mentioned Japan at the Bálványos Free Summer University and Student Camp – commonly

[238] In Hungarian: "Magyarságkutató Intézet"

[239] https://telex.hu/english/2021/05/03/how-to-get-top-marks-from-a-hungarian-professor-spout-conspiracy-theories-about-george-soros

[240] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGhrGqCvYbU (accessed: 2024 June)

known as *Tusványos* – an event that has been held every year in Băile Tușnad, Romania, since 1990. Tusványos has become a prominent platform for members of the Hungarian government and their intellectual allies to espouse their thoughts. The highlight of Tusványos is the keynote speech by Orbán, which is considered instrumental in setting the upcoming political agenda for his political party and his supporters. During his speech, Orbán struck a very different tone about Japan when he said:

> "*The key to the propagation of Western values is LGBTQ. Anyone who does not accept this is now in the 'backward' category as far as the Western world is concerned. I do not know if you have been watching, but I think it is remarkable that in the last six months, pro-LGBTQ laws have been passed by countries such as Ukraine, Taiwan and Japan."*

Japanese straw marquetry sample exhibited at the Vienna World's Fair 1873 (MAK)

Let's return to political Japanophilia: as noted earlier, in the fields of linguistics and genetics, there are no *credible* scientific findings demonstrating any relatedness between Hungarians and Japanese, while *incredible* pseudoscientific

claims are a dime a dozen. Ideologically motivated activists, acting unethically, are not afraid to twist, tweak, and mix partial scientific truths with wishful thinking and outright nonsense to serve certain ideologies (often state-led and far-right), but their approach has numerous obvious flaws. It is evident that we are better off not looking for interpretations of Japanese-Hungarian kinship in terms of linguistic, or genetic realities (as no such realities exist). Instead, this issue should be understood within a complex framework of meta-references, political, ideological, and financial motivations. Politicians and ideological activists are exploiting the pseudo-scientific notion of Hungarian-Japanese kinship as they see fit. Neo-Turanism is purely a political ideology in the 21st century: it keeps the East-West debate alive and continuously triggers political-ideological reactions. The notion of alleged Hungarian-Japanese kinship resurfaces in public speeches, press conferences, festivals, and ceremonies – and, due to its clickbait nature, it gets widely reposted in (social) media. It is a simple, cheap tool for those promoting national exceptionalism, populism, and right-wing nationalist memory/remembrance politics (or, more accurately, ethnogenesis politics). The idea of alleged Hungarian-Japanese relatedness in the public discourse of Hungarian society is nothing but a convenient tool in the hands of Hungarian politicians. It is just a small part of a larger triggering mechanism: leftists provoke the right against the East, and rightists provoke the left against the West, creating a never-ending political-ideological perpetuum mobile. Therefore, it is irrelevant whether the notion is scientifically valid. It serves its purpose by being clickbait while also appealing to the deeply ingrained East-West “receptors” in certain ideological circles. From a cultural history perspective, people are particularly drawn to stories where reality and fiction coexist, which is especially evident in national origin theories. These narratives are used to historicize national consciousness. The Eastern origins of Hungarians were documented in chronicles, and mythologies have always served as tools for legitimizing the political ideas of ruling powers. While the alleged Hungarian-Japanese kinship is not scientifically valid, it persists as a cultural and literary tradition. The only truth we can state about it is that the notion itself exists. Like other national origin theories, this claim of relatedness between Hungarians and Japanese has little to do with actual reality. In our modern times, people seem more inclined to believe in fantasy and myths over history – no matter how far-fetched or nonsensical the story may be. When examining the importance of

national myths, we need to consider that social theorists like Ernest Gellner, Eric J. Hobsbawm, and Benedict Anderson place the concept of the "nation" within a mythical paradigm, viewing it as a form of religious construction. They even connect these two concepts under the umbrella of civil religion.[241] Kapitány and Kapitány describe five distinct functions of myths: 1: Transmitting, mediating worldviews; 2: Confirming, reconfirming, or renewing worldviews 3: Promoting social and group cohesiveness; 4: Legitimizing power 5: Addressing individual psychological needs.[242] From the perspective of ethnogenesis politics, myths explain the nation's beginnings, mythologize the social order, and define the cultural horizon of a new society. The national origin myth draws on ancestral narratives to create a sense of historical continuity, strengthening national self-esteem and rendering historical consciousness a politically usable tool. Cultural origin myths emphasize the authenticity and persistence of archaic culture, constructing symbols and rituals that represent national identity. By portraying an idealized, unified ancient culture, these myths depict the nation as a homogeneous community and link political and social goals to a shared historical past.[243] János Bali notes that in 21st-century Hungary, the myth and culture of the "ancient Hungarian" increasingly appear in media and everyday life. Over the past decade, this revival has spread across diverse spheres: public spaces are "ancient-Hungarized" with *rovásírás* (Old Hungarian script) signs and monuments; neo-pagan shamanic *(táltos)* churches offer unique spiritual experiences; domestic life and dress incorporate historical motifs such as sabretache plates, conquest-era caps, and yurts; and leisure activities include baranta and horse archery. The paradox is that, while ideologically framed as opposition to multiculturalism and consumer culture, the phenomenon fits seamlessly into both: a consumer industry thrives around it, yet participants also engage in a lived culture that contrasts sharply with modern urban life. This resurgence reflects the Hungarian people's historical "in-betweenness" between East and West, with the pendulum swinging toward the East during crises or when

[241] Petr Skalník (ed.): *Ernest Gellner's Legacy and Social Theory Today*. Palgrave Macmillan 2022; Hobsbawm, Eric J. (1983): *Introduction: Inventing Traditions*, In: Hobsbawm, Eric J. & Ranger, Terence O. (ed.): The Invention of Tradition. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Hobsbawm, Eric J. (1992): *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Europe Today*. In: Anthropology Today, 8./ 1.; Anderson, Benedict (2006): *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, London, New York

[242] Kapitány Ágnes; Kapitány Gábor: *A modern mitológiák szemiotikájához*. In: Már a múlt sem a régi...: az új magyar mitológia multidiszciplináris elemzése 18. p. 44. (2015).

[243] Szilárdi Réka: *Feltalált hagyomány – használható múlt. A nyelvtörténet és eredetmítosz polemikus reprezentációi.* In: Bakró-Nagy Marianne: Okok és okozat. A magyar nyelv eredetéről történeti, szociálpszichológiai és filozófiai megközelítésben. Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 2018. pp. 126-128.

Western ties falter. Marginal scholars play a key role in shaping and legitimizing the ancient Hungarian myth, treating their work as a mission rather than a profession. Within these circles, their writings are considered authoritative, blending the guise of science with religious or revelatory significance. They present themselves as authentic historians who preserve the nation's glorious past, in contrast to academic historians who might compromise for external interests. The construction of the ancient Hungarian myth increasingly links Hungarian ethnogenesis with the history, destiny, and mission of other Eastern peoples, reflecting a deep-seated desire to feel "we are not alone". This sense of connection is closely tied to the feeling of historical isolation, motivating practices aimed at discovering related or kindred peoples.[244] With the spread of myths, a question arises regarding the nature of inquiry into the ancient, prehistoric Hungarian past: should this inquiry be left to science, or should it be shaped by ideologically based faith and myth-making as a form of political counterculture? In contemporary Hungary, there are many signs indicating that this inquiry has fallen deep into a political-ideological abyss, with little hope that the phenomenon will be researched through established disciplinary methodologies. Either way, the mythology of origin is not merely a question of religious or historical knowledge; above all, it represents a national emotional and moral stance tied to the self-image of Hungarians, which inevitably has political implications.[245] Hubbes and Povedák argue that pseudoscientific discourses are engaged in a hegemonic battle for the 'possession of historical reality', where specific normative value systems and moral standards shape the present and future of the nation. In this battle, two main opposing paradigms clash: are Hungarians a European or an Asian nation? The most significant aspect of this dispute lies in its strong emotional dimension, which every alternative historian emphasizes. Are the Hungarian people of European origin, but of a "*low, primitive, and insignificant*" Finno-Ugric descent? Or are they of Asian origin, with a narrative of "*glory, heroism, nobility, and ancient civilization*"? In this interpretation, an Asian origin implies world-historical exceptionalism and a universal sense of mission.[246] These national myths have close ties with nationalism, ethno-nationalism and nostalgia.

[244] Bali János: *"Kortárs ősmagyarok": Mítosz és kultúra.* In: Sámán sámán hátán: A kortárs pogányság multidiszciplináris elemzése. 2014. pp. 24-27., 29.
[245] Szilágyi Tamás és Szilárdi Réka (2007): *Istenek ébredése. Az újpogányság vallástudományi vizsgálata*. JATE Press, Szeged.
[246] Hubbes-László Attila – Povedák István: *Már a múlt sem a régi… Az új magyar mitológia multidiszciplináris elemzése*, Szeged 2015, p 15.

Nationalism is an ideology that fosters identity and unity within a group or individual, aiming to establish a sense of belonging among members of a population.[247] Ethno-nationalism, a specific subtype of nationalism, views the nation as a community of descent, linking members through imagined kinship ties to common ancestors and embracing myths of origin, nativist history, folk culture, and populist political philosophies.[248] This form of nationalism frequently appears in post-independence and irredentist movements and is prevalent in contemporary nationalist discourse in Hungary.[249] The concept of nostalgia, derived from the Greek words for “return home” (*nostos*) and “pain” (*algos*), originally described a deep longing for one's homeland. Over time, it evolved to signify a yearning for an idealized past that may never have existed, encompassing both personal and collective memories, and even longing for times and places never directly experienced.[250] When combined with nationalism, nostalgia becomes a longing for a perceived golden age when the nation was seen as homogeneous. This longing can foster a sense of identity and belonging, particularly evident in the far-right discourse in Hungary. As Katherine Kondor and Mark Littler argue, nostalgic nationalism, while related to ethno-nationalism through its focus on ethnic and national collective memories, differs by emphasizing a homogeneous past and seeking identity through historical idealization. Though not all forms of nationalism are nostalgic, contemporary movements often share a preoccupation with an idealized past, supporting far-right ideologies through government-sponsored nostalgic narratives.[251] Regarding the receiving end and the consumers of ethno-nationalism, György Csepeli (one of Hungary's most influential social psychologists and sociologists) aptly identifies the *authoritarian personality* as a typical personality archetype. For the authoritarian personality, the experience of belonging is no longer simply one possible way of relating to the world, but the

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[247] Smith, A. D. (1995). *The dark side of nationalism: The revival of nationalism in late nineteenth century Europ*e. In: L. Cheles, R. Fergwon, & M. Vaughan (Eds.): The far right in western and eastern Europe (2nd ed., pp. 13–19). London: Longman.

[248] Smith, A. D. (1995). *The dark side of nationalism: The revival of nationalism in late nineteenth century Europ*e. In: L. Cheles, R. Fergwon, & M. Vaughan (Eds.), The far right in western and eastern Europe (2nd ed., pp. 13–19). London: Longman; Smith, A. D. (2001). *Nationalism: Theory, ideology, history.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

[249] Katherine Kondor, Mark Littler: *Invented Nostalgia: The Search for Identity Among the Hungarian Far-Right* In: Nostalgia and Hope: Intersections between Politics of Culture, Welfare, and Migration in Europe, 2020.

[250] Goulding, C. (1999). *Heritage, nostalgia, and the “grey” consumer.* Journal of Marketing Practice: Applied Marketing Science, 5(6), 177–199.

[251] Katherine Kondor, Mark Littler: *Invented Nostalgia: The Search for Identity Among the Hungarian Far-Right* In: Nostalgia and Hope: Intersections between Politics of Culture, Welfare, and Migration in Europe, 2020.

relation itself, becoming the measure and frame of reference for everything else. The emotional core of this experience of belonging intensifies into obsession and paranoid-aggressive passion; the vague, incoherent, and unorganized "taken-for-granted" truths, typifications, and relevancies expressible through belonging harden into rigorous dogmas. Nostalgia becomes mythology, mood becomes mania and subjective probability becomes unappealable truth. It is no coincidence that the authoritarian personality exaggerates the emotional core of belonging to the point of blind faith, nor is it accidental that they create a solid explanatory-justificatory system from the cognitive elements of the belonging experience. As Csepeli explains brilliantly, since they cannot identify with themselves, they identify with a superior entity greater than themselves: the nation or the group. If they are fallible, weak, and vulnerable, let their group (and its leader) be rock-solid, strong, and omnipotent. If they cannot predict their own fate even a day in advance, let them see their nation's future secured for millennia. If they themselves are anxious, let them see the masses of those like them as determined and self-assured. If there is no order within them, let them seek order outside. Ultimately, Csepeli notes that it is the authoritarian personality's ego problems which, when projected onto the supra-individual formations articulated by ethnocentric ideology, create the illusion of resolution.[252] According to Nóra Falyuna, there is another interesting aspect regarding consumers of pseudoscientific or conspiracy-theory-based nostalgic national myths: they cannot be easily identified by sociodemographic factors such as gender, occupation, or education. Instead, psychological traits like interpersonal distrust and existential uncertainty, along with behaviors typical of conspiracy-theory followers, are more predictive. Social media further reinforces these tendencies by creating "filter bubbles" that show users content aligned with their preferences, strengthening beliefs through repeated exposure and peer validation within groups or communities.[253] Repeated information – especially when emotionally framed in comments – makes nostalgic national myths, as well as other types of pseudoscientific content, more persuasive.

Politicians play a central role in promoting national myths. The promotion of

[252] Csepeli György: *Nemzeti tudat és érzésvilág Magyarországon a 70-es években*. Múzsák Közművelődési Kiadó, 1982. pp. 32-33.
[253] Veszelszki Ágnes − Falyuna Nóra: *Az áltudományosság leleplezése érveléstechnikai-nyelvészeti eszközökkel*. In: Médiakutató - 20. évf. 3. sz. (2019. ősz). pp. 41-43.

Hungarian-Japanese kinship by politicians and diplomats is partly motivated by unrealistic hopes of achieving economic gains. Still, these efforts have not been reflected in the trade balance between Hungary and Japan, which remains consistently negative.[254] On the other hand, the Hungarian government has been excessively generous in financially supporting Japanese Foreign Direct Investments – offering overly favorable 'loans', waiving certain taxes, and even covering labor costs.[255] In 1994, an official Japanese survey was conducted involving 10 Japanese companies operating in Hungary at the time. One of the reasons they decided to invest in Hungary was the *incentive* offered by the Hungarian state, which included *free land, subsidies covering half the value of company employees' salaries, and other tax incentives for Japanese staff members*.[256] When considering these facts and two other main financial factors – the Hungarian debt in Japanese yen[257] and the trade balance between Japan and Hungary (which remains pathologically negative) – it becomes clear that there is no reciprocity in Hungarian-Japanese trade relations, contrary to the expected win-win scenario based on the notion of 'cousinly' ties. The anticipated economic benefits have largely failed to materialize. The situation is mostly advantageous for Japan, while Hungary sees far fewer benefits – if any at all. When discussing Japanese foreign direct investments (FDIs) in Hungary, it may surprise some to learn that even the promotion of these investments has a distinct ideological background. Camba and Epstein demonstrated that FDIs serve a legitimizing function, particularly significant for economic nationalists with authoritarian tendencies. For these governments,

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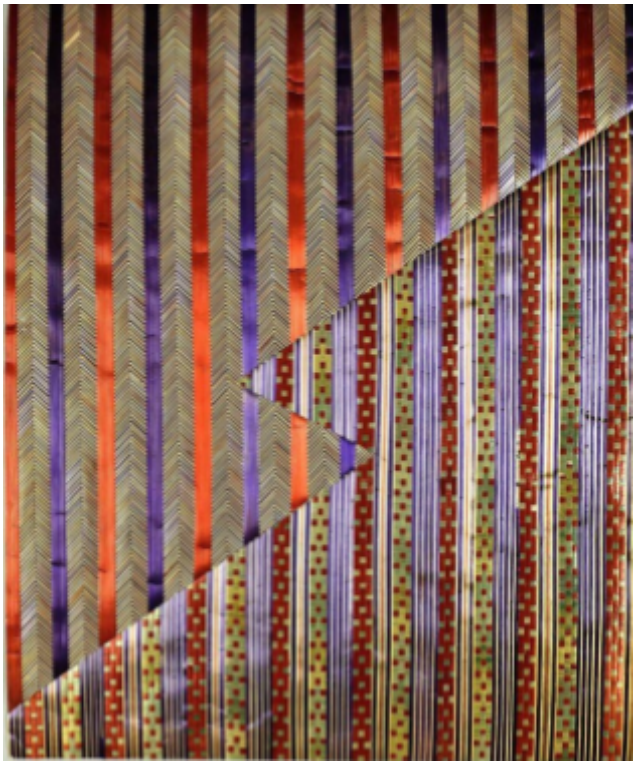
[254] In 2023, the trade balance with Japan was -534,321,550 USD https://ksh.hu/s/helyzetkep-2023/#/kiadvany/kulkereskedelem/termek-kulkereskedelmi-egyenleg-partnerorszagonkent-2023 (accessed: 2024 Sept.)

[255] In 2019, the Hungarian EXIM Bank offered a credit line of 1.2 billion dollars for Japanese investments in Hungary, while the total foreign trade balance with Japan was 2.2 billion USD in the same year. https://hvg.hu/gazdasag/20191205_Szijjarto_Peter_400_japan_tanul_orvosnak_Magyarorszagon (accessed: 2024 Sept.) The Hungarian government prioritized attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) and had established the Hungarian Investment Promotion Agency (HIPA) to assist foreign investors. To recover from the Covid-19 crisis and boost competitiveness, Hungary had implemented several incentive measures, including simplifying administrative processes, easing building permit requirements, and allocating EUR 52.8 billion from the EU budget for productivity, innovation, and infrastructure. Additionally, the corporate tax rate was reduced to 9%, social security contributions to 13%, and special incentives were offered for significant investments (generally above EUR 10 million) in areas such as manufacturing, logistics, R&D, bioenergy, and tourism. https://www.lloydsbanktrade.com/en/market-potential/hungary/investment (accessed: 2024 Sept)

[256] Kawakita, Shinken: *Japanese view of Hungary as an investment destination*. In: The Hungarian Journal of Marketing and Management, 30(4), 2019. p. 18.

[257] In 2024 September, Hungary had ¥115.3 billion ($780 million) of outstanding debt in bonds denominated in the Japanese currency that were offered in 2020 and 2022. https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/investing/2024/09/02/hungary-offers-samurai-bonds-as-government-nears-fx-debt-limit/ (accessed: 2024 Sept.)

promoting FDIs is a component of their “autocratic hedging” strategy. This approach involves leveraging foreign investors as “external rebalancers” to enhance the legitimacy of the government and bolster both international and domestic support.[258] At the same time, central governments sustain public support by showing that their decisions align with the people's will and by delivering policies that advance the public's interests.[259]



Japanese straw marquetry sample exhibited at the Vienna World’s Fair 1873 (MAK)

Apart from financial hopes at the level of foreign trade, investments and other business activities, the narratives of Hungarian-Japanese kinship may also be closely linked to a sense of low self-esteem on the semi-periphery. It serves as a psychological boost, helping the modern semi-peripheral identity elevate itself above the hardships and stresses of modern life. Political Japanophilia and Neo-Turanism can therefore be examined through the lens of right-wing populism studies. There are many ongoing debates on what ‘truly’ makes up populism. The study of populism has faced challenges due to historical inconsistencies in defining and studying the concept. Early research focused on individual movements without

[258] Camba, A., & Epstein, R. A. (2023). *From Duterte to Orbán: The political economy of autocratic hedging*. Journal of International Relations and Development, 26(2), 347–372. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-022-00287-7

[259] Scharpf, Fritz: *Demokratietheorie zwischen utopie und anpassung*. Univ.-Verl., 1972.

comparison and often confused populism with nationalism. As scholars began analyzing the characteristics of populism more closely, significant disagreements arose about its true nature. Populism has been variously seen as an ideology, a strategic approach, a performative style, and a way of framing discourse.[260] These conflicting views have slowed the development of comparative research on populism. It is often understood as a political approach that seeks to represent the interests and will of the "common people" against a perceived elite or establishment. It is a process-oriented logic of creating an 'us' (the people) versus 'them' (the elite), and is defined more by its form than its content. Populism can be filled with various ideological contents, including nationalism, socialism, or even racism, depending on the context. The form of populism relies on the extension of equivalential chains between different demands, positioning 'the people' as a homogenous group that is antagonistic towards an external enemy.[261] Sociologist Rogers Brubaker identifies five elements as part of the 'rhetorical repertoire' of populism. These are: taboo-breaking scandals, antagonistic repoliticization, majoritarianism, anti-institutionalism, and protectionism. In Brubaker's words, "*through an attention-seeking strategy of provocation, they [populists] foreground their willingness to break taboos, refuse euphemisms, and disrupt the conventions of polite speech and 'normal' demeanor*"[262]. In addition, populists seem to be particularly successful on the 'cultural axis' – dealing with issues of the past, memory, religion, and myths.[263] Emotions are instrumental in fostering a sense of unity among populist supporters. While current research on populism has been primarily focusing on how emotional appeals are used to shape opposition to perceived enemies,[264] it would also be valuable to explore how certain populist emotions reassure followers by elevating the status of the Self through association

[260] Olivas Osuna, J.J. (2021): *From chasing populists to deconstructing populism: A new multidimensional approach to understanding and comparing populism*. European Journal of Political Research, 60: 829-853. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12428

[261] Marina Vulović, Emilia Palonen: *Nationalism, populism or peopleism? Clarifying the distinction through a two-dimensional lens*. Nations and Nationalism published by Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism and John Wiley &Sons Ltd. Nations and Nationalism. 2023;29:546–561. DOI: 10.1111/nana.12920

[262] Brubaker R.: *Why populism?* Theory and Society 46(5). Springer: p. 367., 2017

[263] Cesari C.D. and Kaya A.: *European Memory in Populism: Representations of Self and Other.* Routledge, 2019

[264] See: Liv Sunnercratz's new project: "*Polarization, Affect, Identity: Nordic Populism and the Media Landscape*". This research project focuses on how populism constructs an "us versus them" narrative by using emotions, or "affect", to create unity among supporters and opposition to others. It will examine how emotional connotations are applied and spread through the media.
https://www.uis.no/en/about-uis/eight-million-for-research-project-on-populism-in-the-nordic-region (accessed: 2024 Sept.)

with a highly valued Other – suggesting that the Other is, at the end of the day, just as good as the Self or Us. The media plays a crucial role in disseminating these emotionally charged terms, facilitating the transition of these ideas from the fringes to the mainstream. Populism and Political Japanophilia-filled Neo-Turanism share notable similarities in how they construct and project their political narratives. At the core of these movements is an 'us vs. them' dynamic, where populism pits the common people against the elites, while Neo-Turanism positions Hungary against perceived Western powers and global elites. This dichotomy is used to build a sense of unity and identity among supporters, leveraging cultural myths and historical grievances to enhance their political appeal. Both ideologies employ cultural and mythological resonance to strengthen their narratives. Populism thrives on invoking national symbols, historical memory, and religious myths to create emotional connections with the populace. Similarly, Neo-Turanism taps into Hungary's ancient ethnic identity and superiority. Emotional manipulation is central to both populism and Neo-Turanism. Populist movements use cultural taboos and historical grievances[265] to mobilize and unite their base. Neo-Turanism, with its focus on ethnocentrism and exclusive traditions, similarly leverages emotional appeals to foster a sense of pride and superiority. Both ideologies thus use emotionally charged symbols and narratives to consolidate their support and undermine opposition. Furthermore, both movements blur ideological lines to achieve political gain. In Hungary, populism has led to a convergence of mainstream conservatism with far-right rhetoric, reflecting a radicalization of the political landscape. Neo-Turanism, initially on the political periphery, has been co-opted by the ruling Fidesz party, illustrating a similar merging of far-right and mainstream elements. This blending of ideologies highlights a strategic move to expand their political reach and influence. Both populism and Neo-Turanism exhibit anti-elitist and anti-Western sentiments. Right-wing populism in Hungary typically

[265] András Róna-Tas noted that the Hungarian gentry endured severe injustices after 1945. Paths to social advancement were closed, "bourgeois" became a term of derision, and the stigmatized faced persecution or exclusion from education. Only the memory of past glory offered some relief from oppression. After the regime change in 1989, opportunities for citizenship reopened, but progress has stalled and is once again becoming distorted. By the end of the 2010s, political connections outweighed merit, scheming replaced creativity, appearances substituted for results, and bureaucracy undermined the rule of law. A crisis of values appears to be resurfacing: glorified "painted skies" dominate the public consciousness of the 2020s, and the worth of individuals – or of the Hungarian people – is measured not by achievements, but by the legacy of perceived "ancestors" long gone. See: Róna-Tas András: *Őstörténet és társadalmi tudat*. In: Bakró-Nagy Marianne: Okok és okozat. A magyar nyelv eredetéről történeti, szociálpszichológiai és filozófiai megközelítésben. Gondolat Kiadó, Budapest, 2018. p. 172.

targets elites associated with liberal, globalist, or socialist ideologies, while Neo-Turanism expresses a deep-seated opposition to Western influence, framing Hungary as a victim of Western policies and ideologies. This shared antagonism towards external forces reinforces their respective political narratives and appeals to nationalistic sentiments. Finally, both ideologies involve reframing political identity through external references. Populism, as seen in Fidesz's rhetoric, reframes Hungarian identity by contrasting the middle class with Western elites. Political Japanophilia, as part of the broader Neo-Turanism ideology, leverages Japan's positive cultural image to redefine Hungary's national identity in opposition to Western liberalism. In both cases, the strategic use of external ideals helps to build a favorable political narrative and strengthen national identity. In summary, while populism and Political Japanophilia-filled Neo-Turanism may appear distinct in their focus, they are interconnected through their use of emotional appeals, cultural symbolism, and opposition to external (mostly Western) elites.

Hungary's right-wing populist government[266] adopts anti-institutional and protectionist theories to align with broader trends in their politics. They exhibit deep skepticism toward established institutions, viewing them as corrupt or disconnected from the people's true will. This mistrust resonates with anti-institutionalist ideas that challenge the legitimacy of traditional authority structures. By promoting alternative narratives that contest mainstream political, academic, and media institutions, Hungarian right-wing populists aim to undermine established knowledge systems and present their own counter-narratives to their supporters. This anti-institutional stance helps mobilize public discontent against perceived elites, creating a sense of unity among supporters. Hungarian right-wing populists support cultural protectionism, seeking to preserve national identity and traditions against perceived external threats such as Western globalization and liberalism. This stance aligns with protectionist principles of shielding the domestic sphere from foreign influence and rejects globalism, which is portrayed as a threat to national integrity and sovereignty. By adopting subcultural theories popular within right-wing and far-right circles, the Hungarian populist government legitimize these views and bring them into mainstream political discourse. In the Hungarian political arena, boundaries between populist and far-right political messages are becoming increasingly

[266] Further reading: Gábor Szabó: *Populism in Hungary A study of the Fidesz- KDNP government of Hungary in the period between 2010 and 2019*, Master's Thesis, Aalborg University, 2019.

blurred. In practice, this means that traditional right-wing parties adopt and legitimize far-right views, further radicalizing the political mainstream. Meanwhile, hard-line far-right parties moderate their rhetoric to appeal to a broader electorate. This dynamic sometimes results in Hungary's pro-government media and its affiliates "*presenting such a 'mixed reality' that it's hard to distinguish whether something is the latest joke by the Two-tailed Dog Party*[267] *or the genuine political message of Fidesz masterminds*".[268]

(Japan – Korea – China) Reise-Erinnerungen 1903. Photo Album of Ferenc Hopp's travel to the Far-East (private collection)

[267] The "Kétfarkú Kutya Párt" (in Hungarian), founded in 2006, was originally a parody of Hungary's political elite.

[268] György Folk: *Populism merges with the far right: Welcome to Hungarian politics*. Heinrich Böll Stiftung Analysis, 10 May, 2024 https://eu.boell.org/en/2024/05/10/populism-merges-far-right-welcome-hungarian-politics (accessed: 2024 Sept.)

Instead of a Summary: Concluding Thoughts on the Future of Research on Early Bilateral Relations Histories with Japan

The writer of this monograph knows that narrativity was mercilessly sacrificed on the altar of meticulous investigation, and now, as the murderer of narratives[269] *– having finished chopping and slaying his unfortunate victims – stands before the onlookers, exhausted but oddly cheerful, he would like to make a short statement, likely stirring even more controversy.*

Since people want a clear storyline and a narrative arc, it is necessary to address this in the outro. If we want to impose a narrative arc[270] onto the subject of early historical relations between Japan and Hungary, the Hungarian side's narrative is the one that is more easily graspable. On the Hungarian side, this means that overall Japanophilia gradually branched into *cultural* and *political* Japanophilia, while maintaining a certain racist undertone throughout. Political Japanophilia remained rather fringe, whereas cultural Japanophilia – more influenced by Western centers than by Japan itself – enjoyed broader support and was more widespread. On the Japanese side, the picture is more subdued: it tells a story of peripheral but pragmatic interest, with occasional hints of ideological or political use in references to Hungary, making it questionable whether this part can be shaped into the plot-driven narrative that many casual readers crave (although one could certainly argue that the asymmetry of interest and cultural awareness between Japan and Hungary could, in itself, form a compelling narrative).

After addressing the demands of 'narrative junkies', let's turn to the graver issues: Japan–CountryX bilateral history projects often generate misleading or pseudo-comparisons. When Japan is compared recklessly with European countries,

[269] The present author must confess that he is guilty as charged, as the endless accusations of (un)readability suggest: this monograph contains more than 2,300 footnotes spread across over 1,000 pages. To the reader who has heroically reached this point: thank you. You have my deepest sympathy. If, upon closing this volume, you experience an irresistible urge to burn all future footnotes on sight, know that the author will understand and will not hold it against you – provided, of course, that such a pyromaniacal impulse is duly documented in a future scholarly article with proper citation to the present work.

[270] Actually, this book has a narrative arc, despite many missing it. For all those who tend to look without seeing, here's a quick, laziness-proof, pre-chewed, digestible recap: it starts with cultural Japanophilia in contemporary Hungary (given a global spin), then moves through the history of relations with some global references, and ends with the current political Japanophilia in Hungary, which remains historically relevant – thus creating a hearty sandwich of its subject, one big enough to choke anyone trying to bite into it.

such projects reinforce ideological assumptions. Many of these projects are undertaken by a single individual – often a diplomat, but very rarely a trained, self-reflective, and disciplinarily up-to-date historian. This work should clearly be done by ***interdisciplinary academic teams, not by enthusiastic, deluded storytellers*** whose interpretations risk making things worse. To make matters more complicated, these projects are influenced by ***government funding and soft-power agendas, which often leave a clearly visible bias in the outcomes***. Unsupervised grassroots enthusiasm, while sometimes producing easily digestible narratives and seemingly harmless uncritical conclusions, ultimately does more harm than good, since critical methodology is usually absent. Should anyone doubt my assessment, consulting these works will quickly reveal how accurate my critique is: Ene Selart: *Eesti ja Jaapan: suhted 19. sajandist 21. sajandi alguseni* (Tartu, 2024); Aleš Gabrič: *Od popolne neznanke do prisrčne prijateljice: Slovensko spoznavanje Japonske, njenih prebivalcev in običajev* (Ljubljana, 2023); Kiss Sándor: *Japán vonzásában: Magyarok, akik szerették Japánt* (Budapest, 2017). Research is frequently conducted within ***ethnocentric, nationalistic, Orientalist, or Japanophilic echo chambers, and rigorously critical approaches remain rare or superficial***. These works also suffer from ***severe epistemological blindness, failing to reflect on their own assumptions, positionality, or relationship to the subject***. Within the numerous shortcomings, a particularly significant problem is the strong ethnocentrism and nation-centeredness present in most early bilateral historiographical works dealing with a European country and Japan. This narrows the scope of analysis and limits the potential for more nuanced, transnational understandings.

In my opinion, producing high-quality bilateral history should be carried out in three stages, which together provide the strongest framework.

Stage 1: Unavoidable Nation-Centric Foundations

It is a fact that nation-centric and epistemologically blind works will continue to be produced, often financially supported by governments, whether undertaken by individuals or small informal groups of self-proclaimed 'Japan experts', 'Japan hands', (ex-)diplomats, or virtually anyone from all imaginable walks of life with the faintest connection to Japan (but strong ties to influential political and ideological circles). The

history of relations before the formation of nation-states can also be understood within a national context, as seen in the cases of Polish, Czech, Slovak, Estonian, and Slovenian relations with Japan, to name just a few. Since nation-centered perspectives remain the default approach in the historiography of early Japanese-European relations, we must acknowledge that the first layer of research will inevitably be nation-centric, uncritical, and, to say the least, disciplinarily questionable. The only aspect that could change in the future is if these government-supported projects moved beyond one-person, 'the blind leading the blind' endeavors and became structured, methodologically rigorous, interdisciplinary research led by self-reflective groups of real scholars. Such projects should involve trained and disciplinarily reliable researchers in Japanese studies, linguistics, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century history, economic history, geography, cultural anthropology, psychology, political science, digital humanities, and art history, at a minimum. A clear conceptual vision should be established before any research begins (unfortunately, this is overlooked in most cases). At present, I have strong doubts that such an approach has ever been applied in any bilateral relations history project related to Japan. Nevertheless, ethnocentric bilateral relations historiography is not as hopeless as it may seem. On the fortunate side of this story, publishing first in the national language can be justifiable, even crucial. It allows the work to engage the local public, potentially uncover family archives, attract a wider range of experts, and reveal previously unknown primary sources. Moreover, it helps preserve the scientific vocabulary of the local language in an increasingly English-dominated academic world. These traits could serve as a foundation to build upon, which brings us to my next point.

Stage 2: Rewriting Ethnocentric Works for Global Relevance

Nation-centric works should be reassessed from a self-reflective perspective, and translated into English in a rewritten form that situates them within both local and global contexts. Their original flaws can be regarded as highly valuable, as they provide a strong starting point for deeper critical analysis. This stage is intended to diminish the dominance of ethnocentric and individual-centered interpretations, while placing the research within broader comparative, critical, and transnational frameworks. The current book attempts to do exactly this and thus serves as a bridge

between the national and transnational approaches, with one pillar situated within the national and the other in the global. Since most readers are not accustomed to this kind of prism-like interpretation, it comes at the palpable cost of exhibiting significant fragmentation, which can be refined in the future.

Stage 3: Transnational, Transregional, Transimperial Synthesis

Finally, the outputs of Stage 2 should be integrated into larger transnational and inter-imperial studies, written exclusively in English. Studying multiple regional historical relations (Hungarian–Japanese, Polish–Japanese, Czech–Japanese, etc.) can be highly valuable for channeling these experiences into comparative analyses of inter-imperial global diplomacy, trade, and cultural exchange. This stage allows for more comprehensive and globally relevant analyses that move beyond national frameworks while building on the foundations established in the previous stages. Ultimately, it offers a significantly broader perspective and analytical scope, with the potential to engage both international academic and non-academic audiences. Transnational approach examines actors, actions, and events beyond the confines of national frameworks, placing them within cross-border connections and comparisons. It decouples the 'national' from the analysis, enabling a broader, regionally comparable understanding. (The concept of the 'transnational' depends on how the 'national' is defined. Scholarship on nationalism – especially influenced by thinkers like Ernest Renan and later Eric Hobsbawm – shows that nations are modern, fluid, and not rooted in ethnicity or race. Rejecting rigid or ethnically focused definitions of nationhood, the transnational is framed as a modern phenomenon that interacts with national borders culturally rather than geographically. Transnational flows make national borders porous, influencing and enriching cultures as they intersect, highlighting diversity beyond the singularity of the 'national'.) Some researchers have also argued for the need to adopt *transimperial* perspectives. While national history has become increasingly transnational, the study of empires has remained largely confined to national frameworks. They propose a transimperial approach that examines interactions among empires – including *competition*, *cooperation*, and *connectivity* – as interconnected processes. This perspective decentralizes imperial history, incorporates marginalized empires beyond the traditional (primarily British) focus, and emphasizes the importance of analyzing how imperial relationships

evolved across shared spaces and over time. Alongside transnational and transimperial approaches, some scholars – especially in German-speaking academia – use the term *transregional*, though it is less common elsewhere. But regardless of terminology, it is evident that contemporary social sciences and humanities remain inadequate for explaining a globalized, networked world. Ideally, a long-term intellectual evolution will take place within historiography, in which labels such as “transnational”, “transregional” or “global” may eventually become unnecessary. In this scenario, history as a discipline would naturally incorporate these perspectives as standard practice, without the need for separate conceptual categories. Undoubtedly, this stage presents even greater challenges for rewriting the European/Global history of relations with Japan: oversimplification or overcorrection could erase local nuance, so preserving invaluable local contexts while achieving transnational relevance is essential.

There is one aspect of researching European/Global historical relations with Japan in an interdisciplinary manner that I have rarely seen highlighted in outputs of this kind: its undeniably positive effects within and beyond academic circles. This subject is particularly well-suited for academia-driven open citizen science projects. There are multiple cognitive benefits to this type of inquiry into bilateral relations histories in a world increasingly prone to intellectual laziness: it fosters bias- and self-awareness, encourages long-form, deeper thinking, promotes critical approaches, and is inclusive – as long as participants remain within the ‘knowable’ and are kept from misleading excursions into the vague realms of the ‘wishful’ or ‘self-serving’. Another inevitable bonus of research into historical relations between countries is that, in the course of such work, one encounters cultural legacies that have already been forgotten in our contemporary cultural landscapes – which is a truly wonderful experience. The author of this monograph has had his heart forever captured by countless exciting, artistically valuable, and profound contemporary creators and their works, which alone made the research worthwhile. Forgotten works and authors have emerged from the mists of the past, evoking a kind of childlike wonder – an experience that certainly would not have occurred anywhere else.

At the end of this monograph, allow me to offer a few thoughts on applicability or utility, or, in other words, the current value of the research results of the history of

relations with Japan from the perspective of ‘applied history’. But first, we need to step back a little and consider the many dimensions through which we can relate to and reflect on the past, as these also suggest different reasons for people to engage with it: **material** (sources, statistics) **cultural/experiential** (aesthetic, political) and **intellectual** (epistemic, moral). Applied history is the idea that historical knowledge should and could be used to inform present-day policy-making (whether social, cultural, or diplomatic) especially through drawing lessons from the past. While it is not difficult to recognize the good intentions behind such an approach, in real-life situations there is a central tension inherent in applied history itself, which concerns the epistemological and moral dimensions of relating to the past, as history can be both *constructively used* to inform policymaking and *intentionally misused or abused* for ideological purposes. In the 20th century, politicised and selective uses of history by regimes and ideologies damaged the reputation of applied history, even though historical thinking continued to influence politics in various ways. In the present, growing political crises and the widespread manipulation of history definitely make applied history both more relevant and more urgent – not as something done only by expert consultants, but rather as a way of integrating historical thinking into policymaking itself, emphasizing complexity, and context. That is why incorporating research outputs from studies of historical bilateral relations into diplomacy (which relies heavily on historical understanding) is immensely important, since in many countries diplomats are rarely trained in this systematically. As a result, assessments of how and why history matters in different diplomatic contexts are often not explored in enough depth. Historical thinking skills – such as empathy, multiperspectivity, contextualization, and critical reflection – can significantly improve policymaking and government learning capacity. Unfortunately, there is still a considerable “knowledge paradox”, where valuable academic, institutional and citizen knowledge exists but is underused due to weak connections between researchers and policymakers. Social and historical sciences offer important tools for addressing complex policy problems by integrating multiple perspectives and questioning assumptions. However, these skills are often missing in evidence-based policymaking, despite their value in helping policymakers better evaluate information, frameworks, and the use of data and historical narratives. Global or transnational relations history can be seen as a crystallized form of applied history, whether we label it “history with a public purpose”, “practical history”, or “critical public history”, since all refer to the same basic idea:

using historical expertise to understand past and present global issues, while maintaining disciplinary standards. Thinking historically is valuable because it helps overcome short-term thinking by connecting past, present, and future over longer time horizons. This broader perspective should play a more decisive role in histories of transnational relations, as it turns a poorly read historiography gathering dust on a bookshelf into a very effective corrective mechanism that fosters curiosity and critical reflection and enables a more thoughtful evaluation of contemporary conditions.

To narrow down and more precisely define the areas in which historical relations studies can add value, as well as other public-oriented, real-world applications, we can mention several examples. Clearly, incorporating such studies is highly beneficial to universities, both for teaching and research purposes; to diplomacy, in improving international understanding; and to country marketing and tourism, by creating more engaging, people-centered, and sustainable experiences. They can support the development of public-oriented cultural and historical services such as themed tours, curated historical routes, and experiential events like storytelling-based dinners or cultural evenings that help make history more accessible and engaging to the public. Seeing the value of historical relations research through the lens of applied history, one of its most important features is that it can help challenge politically or ideologically simplified or distorted narratives, offering a way to critically address and “de-learn” authoritarian or populist propaganda by providing more nuanced historical perspectives. Another important consideration is that academic careers no longer seem to provide the financial stability they once did, leading many scholars to seek alternative sources of income. One promising path is to leverage their expertise and teaching skills to build a sustainable online business and personal brand, for example as a public historian. The interdisciplinary nature of bilateral historical relations, together with their vast body of sources and multitude of historical actors, makes this field an almost inexhaustible reservoir for these new types of public historians.

And finally, with a sly nod to the furious onlookers who did not get their addictive, emotionally charged narrative fix, the author of this book – overlooking all his plot cadavers – excuses himself from the stage, robe still dotted with the evidence of his meticulous work. He is now a would-be overlooker, perching above the scene with keen anticipation, amused and alert – but knowing that more of these carefully

dissected histories are unlikely to parade across the stage for the foreseeable future, he may need a very long cigar break before he can truly settle into his watchful post.

APPENDIX

The Diplomatic Mission of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Japan

Year	Location of the Legation, Consulate and Embassy	Name (*including alternative spellings/forms used elsewhere*)	Position, remarks
1868		Anton Baron von Petz	Minister Plenipotentiary
		Hengelmüller von Hengervár, Ladislaus	Consul General Chancellor for China and Japan, with simultaneous assignment to the East Asian Expedition
		Scherzer, Dr. phil. Carl Ritter von	First Officer of the East Asian Expedition
1869		Anton Baron von Petz	Minister Plenipotentiary
1870		Chevalier Henry de Calice (Heinrich Freiherr von Calice; Heinrich von Calicé; Calice, Baron Henry de)	Consul General I Class and Minister Resident at the courts of China, Japan, and Siam
	Yokohama	Fred. Lowder	Acting Consul
1871	**Yedo (Tokyo)**	Chevalier Henry de Calice (Heinrich Freiherr von Calice; Heinrich von Calicé; Calice, Baron Henry de)	Consul General, Chargé d'affaires (residing in Shanghai)
		Siebold, H. de (Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	student interpreter
	Yokohama	Russell Robertson (Robertson, Russell Brooke)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	R. Eusden (Eusden, Richard)	Acting Consul
1872	**Yedo (Tokyo)**	Siebold, H. de (Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	student interpreter
	Yokohama	Russell Robertson (Robertson, Russell Brooke)	Acting Consul
	Nagasaki	Flowers, Marcus O. (Flowers, Marcus Octavius)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	J. Troup	Acting Consul
1873	**Yedo (Tokyo)**	Chevalier Henry de Calice (Heinrich Freiherr von Calice; Heinrich von Calicé; Calice, Baron Henry de)	Consul General 1st Class and Minister Resident
		Siebold, H. de (Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Interpreter
	Yokohama	Russell Robertson (Robertson, Russell Brooke)	Acting Consul
	Nagasaki	Flowers, Marcus O. (Flowers, Marcus Octavius)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	Eusden, R. (Eusden, Richard)	Acting Consul (absent)
		Troupe J. J.	Acting Consul
1874	**Yedo (Tokyo)**	Chevalier Henry de Calice (Heinrich Freiherr von Calice; Heinrich von Calicé Calice, Baron Henry de)	Consul General 1st Class and Minister Resident
		Siebold, H. de (Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Honorary interpreter attaché
	Yokohama	Russell Robertson (Robertson, Russell Brooke)	Acting Consul
	Kobe-Hyogo	Gower, Abel A. J.	Acting Consul
	Nagasaki	Flowers, Marcus O. (Flowers, Marcus Octavius)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	Eusden, R. (Eusden, Richard)	Acting Consul
1875	**Yedo (Tokyo)**	Schaeffer, Chev. I. de (Schaeffer, Ignaz Frhr. von)	Envoy
		Siebold, H. de (Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Honorary interpreter, Attaché
	Yokohama	Russell Robertson (Robertson, Russell Brooke)	Acting Consul
	Hyogo	Annesley, A. A. (Annesley, Adolphus Arthur)	Acting Consul
	Nagasaki	Flowers, Marcus O. (Flowers, Marcus Octavius)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	Eusden, R. (Eusden, Richard)	Acting Consul
1876	**Yokohama**	Siebold, H. de (Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Honorary interpreter, Attaché
		Von Roretz, A., M. D.	Physician to the legation
		Russell Robertson (Robertson, Russell Brooke)	Acting Consul
	Yedo (Tokyo)	Schaeffer, Chev. I. de (Schaeffer, Ignaz Frhr. von)	Envoy
		Siebold, H. de (Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Honorary interpreter, Attaché
		Dohmen, M. (Dohmen, Martin)	Acting Consul
	Hyogo	Gower, Abel, A. J.	Acting Consul
	Nagasaki	Flowers, Marcus O. (Flowers, Marcus Octavius)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	Eusden, R. (Eusden, Richard)	Acting Consul
1877	**Yokohama (Consulate)**	Siebold, H. de (Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Honorary interpreter, Attaché
		Russell Robertson (Robertson, Russell Brooke)	Acting Consul
	Tokyo (Legation)	Schaeffer, Chev. I. de (Schaeffer, Ignaz Frhr. von)	Envoy
		Siebold, H. de (Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Honorary interpreter, Attaché
		Von Roretz, A., M. D.	Physician to the legation; (residing in Nagoya)
		Wilkinson, H. S.	Acting Consul
	Hyogo	Annesley, A. A. (Annesley, Adolphus Arthur)	Acting Consul
	Nagasaki	Flowers, Marcus O. (Flowers, Marcus Octavius)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	Eusden, R. (Eusden, Richard)	Acting Consul
1878	**Yokohama (Consulate)**	Siebold, H. de (Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Attaché, Interpreter
		Russell Robertson (Robertson, Russell Brooke)	Acting Consul

	Tokyo (Legation)	Schaeffer, Chev. I. de (Schaeffer, Ignaz Frhr. von)	Envoy (absent)
		Siebold, H. de (Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Honorary interpreter, Attaché
		Von Roretz, A., M. D.	Physician to the legation; (residing in Nagoya)
		Wilkinson, H. S.	Acting Consul
	Hyogo	Annesley, A. A. (Annesley, Adolphus Arthur)	Acting Consul
	Nagasaki	Troup, James	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	Eusden, R. (Eusden, Richard)	Acting Consul
1879	**Yokohama**	Sir Harry S. Parkes, K. C. B	Acting Consular Envoy
	(Consulate)	Siebold, H. de (Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Honorary interpreter attaché
		Martin Dohmen	Acting Consular Envoy
	Tokyo (Legation)	Schaeffer, Chev. I. de (Schaeffer, Ignaz Frhr. von)	Envoy (absent)
		Sir Harry S. Parkes, K. C. B.	Acting Consul
		Siebold, H. de (Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Honorary interpreter, Attaché
		Von Roretz, A., M. D.	Physician to the legation; (residing in Nagoya)
	Hyogo	Flowers, Marcus O. (Flowers, Marcus Octavius)	Acting Consul
	Nagasaki	Troup, James	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	Eusden, R. (Eusden, Richard)	Acting Consul
1880	**Yokohama**	H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry	Attaché
	(Consulate)	von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	
	No. 145., Bluff	J. H. Gubbins (Gubbins, John Harrington)	Acting Consul
	Tokyo (Legation)	Chevalier Hoffer de Hoffenfels (Hoffer von	Minister Resident at the courts of China, Japan, and Siam and
	43, Akasaka	Hoffenfels, Maximilian)	Consul General in Shanghai
	Hikawa-cho Genba	Parkes, Sir Harry S., K. C. B.	Acting Consular Envoy
	Yashiki		
		H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Attaché
	Hyogo	Flowers, Marcus O. (Flowers, Marcus Octavius)	Acting Consul
	Nagasaki	Troup, James	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	Eusden, R. (Eusden, Richard)	Acting Consul
1881	**Yokohama**	H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry	Attaché
	(Consulate)	von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	
	No. 145., Bluff	Martin Dohmen	Acting Consul
	Tokyo (Legation)	Chevalier Hoffer de Hoffenfels (Hoffer von	Minister Resident at the courts of China, Japan, and Siam and
	No. 19. Nagata-cho,	Hoffenfels, Maximilian)	Consul General in Shanghai
	Icchome,	Ernest M. Satow	Acting Vice-Consul
	Kojimachi-ku, Tokyo	H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Attaché
	Nagasaki	Troup, James	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	Quin, John J. (Quin, John James)	Acting Consul
1882	**Yokohama**	H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry	Legation Secretary
	(Consulate)	von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	
	No. 145., Bluff	Von Roretz, A., M. D.	physician to the legation
		J. J. Enslie (Enslie, James Joseph)	Acting Consul
	Tokyo (Legation)	Chevalier Hoffer de Hoffenfels (Hoffer von	Acting Minister Resident at the courts of China, Japan, and Siam
	No. 19. Nagata-cho,	Hoffenfels, Maximilian)	and Consul General in Shanghai
	Icchome,	J. H. Longford (Longford, Joseph Henry)	Acting Vice-Consul and Chancellor
	Kojimachi-ku, Tokyo	H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Legation Secretary
		Von Roretz, A., M. D.	Physician to the legation
	Hyogo	Aston, W. G.	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban		
	Nagasaki	Troup, James	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	Quin, John J. (Quin, John James)	Acting Consul
1883	**Yokohama**	Chevalier Hoffer de Hoffenfels (Hoffer von	Minister Resident (absent)
	(Consulate)	Hoffenfels, Maximilian)	
		Baron von Zedtwitz	Chargé d'affaires
		H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Legation Secretary (absent)
		J. H. Longford (Longford, Joseph Henry)	Acting Consul
	Tokyo (Legation)	Chevalier Hoffer von Hoffenfels	Envoy (absent)
	No. 19. Nagata-cho,	Baron von Zedtwitz	Chargé d'affaires
	Icchome,	H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry	Legation Secretary (absent)
	Kojimachi-ku, Tokyo	von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	
	Hyogo	Aston, W. G.	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban		
	Nagasaki	Hall J. C. (Hall, John Carey)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	J. J. Enslie (Enslie, James Joseph)	Acting Consul
1884	**Yokohama**	H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry	Consulate Chancellery Secretary
	(Consulate), Bluff	von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	
	No. 179.	Russell Robertson (Robertson, Russell Brooke)	Envoy
	Tokyo (Legation)	Count Charles Zaluski (Karl Bernhard Graf	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary for Japan, China
	Mita, Koyama	Zaluski, Karl Graf Zaluski)	and Siam
		H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Legation Secretary
		J. H. Longford (Longford, Joseph Henry)	Acting Consul
	Hyogo	Troup, J.	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban		
	Nagasaki	Aston, W. G.	Acting Consul
		C. E. Boeddinghaus	Honorary Consul
	Hakodate	Quin, John J. (Quin, John James)	Acting Consul

1885	**Yokohama (Consulate), Bluff No. 179.**	H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Consulate Chancellery Secretary
		Russell Robertson (Robertson, Russell Brooke)	Consul
	Tokyo (Legation) Mita, Koyama	Count Charles Zaluski (Karl Bernhard Graf Zaluski; Karl Graf Zaluski)	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary for Japan, China and Siam
		H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Legation Secretary
		J. H. Longford (Longford, Joseph Henry)	Acting Vice-Consul
	Hyogo Ku-ban	Troup, J.	Acting Consul
	Nagasaki	J. J. Enslie (Enslie, James Joseph)	Acting Consul
1886	**Yokohama (Consulate), Bluff No. 61.**	H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Consulate Chancellery Secretary
		Hauptmann Gustavus von Kreitner (Kreitner Gusztáv; Kreitner, Gustav von; Gustav Kreitner; G. Ritter von Kreitner)	Consul
	Tokyo (Legation) Mita, Koyama	Count Charles Zaluski (Karl Bernhard Graf Zaluski; Karl Graf Zaluski)	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary for Japan, China and Siam
		H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Legation Secretary
		J. H. Longford (Longford, Joseph Henry)	Acting Vice-Consul
	Kobe Ku-ban	Troup, J.	Acting Consul
	Nagasaki	J. J. Enslie (Enslie, James Joseph)	Acting Consul
1887	**Yokohama (Consulate) No. 61., Bluff**	H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Consulate Chancellery Secretary
		Hauptmann Gustavus von Kreitner (Kreitner Gusztáv; Kreitner, Gustav von; Gustav Kreitner; G. Ritter von Kreitner)	Consul
	Tokyo (Legation) Mita, Koyama	Count Charles Zaluski (Karl Bernhard Graf Zaluski; Karl Graf Zaluski)	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary for Japan, China and Siam
		H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Legation Secretary, Chargé d'affaires ad interim
		J. H. Longford (Longford, Joseph Henry)	Acting Vice-Consul
	Kobe Ku-ban	Troup, J.	Acting Consul
	Nagasaki	J. J. Enslie (Enslie, James Joseph)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	Quin, John J. (Quin, John James)	Acting Consul
1888	**Tokyo (Legation) Mita, Koyama**	H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Chargé d'affaires ad interim
	Yokohama (Consulate) No. 61., Bluff	Baron R. von Biegeleben (Rüdiger Freiherr von Biegeleben; Rüdiger Baron von Biegeleber)	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary (to China, Japan and Siam)
		Hauptmann Gustavus von Kreitner (Kreitner Gusztáv; Kreitner, Gustav von; Gustav Kreitner; G. Ritter von Kreitner)	Consul
	Kobe Ku-ban	Troup, J.	Acting Consul
	Nagasaki	J. J. Enslie (Enslie, James Joseph)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	Quin, John J. (Quin, John James)	Acting Consul
1889	**Tokyo (Legation) Yamato Yasiki, Akasaka, Tokyo**	Baron R. von Biegeleben (Rüdiger Freiherr von Biegeleben; Rüdiger Baron von Biegeleber)	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary (to China, Japan and Siam)
		H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Chargé d'affaires ad interim, Legation Secretary
		J. H. Gubbins (Gubbins, John Harrington)	Acting Vice-Consul
	Yokohama (Consulate) No. 61., Bluff	Hauptmann Gustavus von Kreitner (Kreitner Gusztáv; Kreitner, Gustav von; Gustav Kreitner; G. Ritter von Kreitner)	Consul
	Kobe Ku-ban	Quin, John J. (Quin, John James)	Acting Consul
	Nagasaki	J. J. Enslie (Enslie, James Joseph)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	H. A. C. Bonar	Acting Consul
1890	**Tokyo (Legation) Legation 15, Kami-Nibancho, Kojimachi-ku, Tokyo**	Baron R. von Biegeleben (Rüdiger Freiherr von Biegeleben; Rüdiger Baron von Biegeleber)	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary (to China, Japan and Siam)
		E. A. Griffiths (Griffiths, Ernest Alfred)	Acting Vice-Consul
	Yokohama (Consulate) No. 73., Bluff	Hauptmann Gustavus von Kreitner (Kreitner Gusztáv; Kreitner, Gustav von; Gustav Kreitner; G. Ritter von Kreitner)	Consul (absent)
		E. von Hirsch (Emil von Hirsch; Emil Edler von Hirsch)	Vice-Consul
		T. Yoshikawa	Interpreter
	Kobe Ku-ban	J. H. Longford (Longford, Joseph Henry)	Acting Consul
	Nagasaki	Quin, John J. (Quin, John James)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	Playfair, F. W.	Acting Consul
1891	**Tokyo (Legation) Legation 15, Kami-Nibancho, Kojimachi-ku, Tokyo**	Baron R. von Biegeleben (Rüdiger Freiherr von Biegeleben; Rüdiger Baron von Biegeleber)	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary (to China, Japan and Siam)
		Baron H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Legation Secretary
		E. A. Griffiths (Griffiths, Ernest Alfred)	Acting Vice-Consul
	Yokohama (Consulate) No. 73/b., Bluff	Hauptmann Gustavus von Kreitner (Kreitner Gusztáv; Kreitner, Gustav von; Gustav Kreitner; G. Ritter von Kreitner)	Consul (absent)

		E. von Hirsch (Emil von Hirsch; Emil Edler von Hirsch)	Vice-Consul
		T. Yoshikawa	Interpreter
	Kobe	J. J. Enslie (Enslie, James Joseph)	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban		
	Nagasaki	Hall, J. C. (Hall, John Carey)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	J. H. Longford (Longford, Joseph Henry)	Acting Consul
1892	**Tokyo (Legation) 15, Kami-Nibancho, Kojimachi-ku, Tokyo**	Baron R. von Biegeleben (Rüdiger Freiherr von Biegeleben; Rüdiger Baron von Biegeleber)	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary (to China, Japan and Siam)
		Baron H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Legation Secretary 1st Class
		E. von Hirsch (Emil von Hirsch; Emil Edler von Hirsch)	Vice-Consul
	Yokohama (Consulate) No. 1., Bluff	Hauptmann Gustavus von Kreitner (Kreitner Gusztáv; Kreitner, Gustav von; Gustav Kreitner; G. Ritter von Kreitner)	Consul
		T. Yoshikawa	Interpreter
	Kobe	J. J. Enslie (Enslie, James Joseph)	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban		
	Nagasaki	Hall, J. C. (Hall, John Carey)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	J. H. Longford (Longford, Joseph Henry)	Acting Consul
1893	**Tokyo (Legation) 10, Kaga-cho, Ushigome, Tokyo**	Baron R. von Biegeleben (Rüdiger Freiherr von Biegeleben; Rüdiger Baron von Biegeleber)	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary for Japan, China and Siam - absent)
		Count H. Coudenhove LL. D. Lieutenant (Count Heinrich von Coudenhove-Kalergi; Heinrich Graf von Coudenhove-Kalergi)	Chargé d'affaires, Secretary 1st Class
		Baron H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Legation Secretary, interpreter (absent)
	Yokohama (Consulate) No. 215., Bluff	Hauptmann Gustavus von Kreitner (Kreitner Gusztáv; Kreitner, Gustav von; Gustav Kreitner; G. Ritter von Kreitner)	Consul
		T. Yoshikawa	Interpreter
	Kobe	J. J. Enslie (Enslie, James Joseph)	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban		
	Nagasaki	Quin, J. J. (Quin, John J.; Quin, John James)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	Hall, J. C. (Hall, John Carey)	Acting Consul
1894	**Tokyo Legation 26, Ushigome, Nando-cho, Tokyo**	Count H. Coudenhove LL. D. Lieutenant (Count Heinrich von Coudenhove-Kalergi; Heinrich Graf von Coudenhove-Kalergi)	Chargé d'affaires, Secretary
		Baron H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Legation Secretary 1st Class, interpreter, Acting Consul
	Yokohama (Consulate) No. 215., Bluff	Hauptmann Gustavus von Kreitner (Kreitner Gusztáv; Kreitner, Gustav von; Gustav Kreitner; G. Ritter von Kreitner)	Consul
		T. Yoshikawa	Interpreter
	Kobe	J. J. Enslie (Enslie, James Joseph)	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban		
	Nagasaki	Quin, J. J. (Quin, John J.; Quin, John James)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	Hall, J. C. (Hall, John Carey)	Acting Consul
1895	**Tokyo Legation 26, Usigome, Nando-cho, Tokyo**	Count H. Coudenhove LL. D. Lieutenant (Count Heinrich von Coudenhove-Kalergi; Heinrich Graf von Coudenhove-Kalergi)	Chargé d'affaires, Secretary
		Baron H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Legation Secretary 1st Class
	Yokohama (Consulate) No. 76/b., Bluff	Dr. A. de Flesch (Alfred Aladár Flesch von Borsa; Flesch Aladár)	Consul
		T. Shirakami	Interpreter
	Kobe	J. J. Enslie (Enslie, James Joseph)	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban		
	Nagasaki	Quin, J. J. (Quin, John J.; Quin, John James)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	Hall, J. C. (Hall, John Carey)	Acting Consul
1896	**Tokyo Legation 26, Usigome, Nando-cho, Tokyo**	Count Wydenbruck (Christian Graf von Wydenbruck; Christoph Graf von Wydenbruck)	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
		Count H. Coudenhove LL. D. Lieutenant (Count Heinrich von Coudenhove-Kalergi; Heinrich Graf von Coudenhove-Kalergi)	Secretary
		Baron H. von Siebold (Siebold, H. de; Siebold, Henry von; Siebold, Heinrich Frhr. von)	Legation Secretary, interpreter
		Captain Baron F. d'Aehrenthal	? (attached to the Legation)
	Yokohama (Consulate)	Dr. A. de Flesch (Alfred Aladár Flesch von Borsa; Flesch Aladár)	Consul
	No. 76/b., Bluff	T. Shirakami	Interpreter
	Kobe	J. J. Enslie (Enslie, James Joseph)	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban		
	Nagasaki	Quin, J. J. (Quin, John J.; Quin, John James)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	A. M. Chalmers	Acting Consul
1897	**Tokyo Legation 15, Kami-Nibancho, Kojimachi-ku, Tokyo**	Count Wydenbruck (Christian Graf von Wydenbruck; Christoph Graf von Wydenbruck)	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
		Captain Baron F. d'Aehrenthal	? (attached to the Legation)
		Asahi Ikutaro (朝日幾太郎)	Interpreter
	Yokohama (Consulate)	Dr. A. de Flesch (Alfred Aladár Flesch von Borsa; Flesch Aladár)	Consul (absent)
	No. 76/b., Bluff	Dr. Charles Bernauer	Secretary
		T. Shirakami	Interpreter

	Kobe	Hall, J. Carey (Hall, John Carey)	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban		
	Nagasaki	J. H. Longford (Longford, Joseph Henry)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	R. de B. Layard	Acting Consul
1898	**Tokyo**	Count Wydenbruck (Christian Graf von	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
	Legation 15,	Wydenbruck; Christoph Graf von Wydenbruck)	
	Kami-Nibancho,	Antoine de Grubissich Keresztur	Councillor
	Kojimachi-ku, Tokyo	A. Makita	Interpreter
		Asahi Ikutaro (朝日幾太郎)	Interpreter
	Yokohama	Dr. A. de Flesch (Alfred Aladár Flesch von Borsa;	Consul
	(Consulate)	Flesch Aladár)	
	No. 76/b., Bluff	Dr. Charles Bernauer	Attaché
		St. Tisljar	Secretary
	Kobe	Hall, J. Carey (Hall, John Carey)	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban		
	Nagasaki	J. H. Longford (Longford, Joseph Henry)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	R. de B. Layard	Acting Consul
1899	**Tokyo Legation**	Count Wydenbruck (Christian Graf von	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
	Kioi-cho,	Wydenbruck; Christoph Graf von Wydenbruck)	
	Kojimaki-ku, Tokyo	Antoine de Grubissich Keresztur	Councillor
		A. Makita	Interpreter
		Asahi Ikutaro (朝日幾太郎)	Interpreter
	Yokohama	Dr. A. de Flesch (Alfred Aladár Flesch von Borsa;	Consul
	(Consulate)	Flesch Aladár)	
	No. 76/b., Bluff	St. Tisljar	Secretary
	Kobe	Hall, J. Carey (Hall, John Carey)	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban		
	Nagasaki	J. H. Longford (Longford, Joseph Henry)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	F. W. W. Playfair	Acting Consul
1900	**Tokyo Legation**	Antoine de Grubissich Keresztur	Chargé d'affaires
	Kioi-cho,	K. Naruse	Interpreter
	Kojimaki-ku, Tokyo	Asahi Ikutaro (朝日幾太郎)	Interpreter
	Yokohama	Dr. A. de Flesch (Alfred Aladár Flesch von Borsa;	Consul
	(Consulate)	Flesch Aladár)	
	No. 76/b., Bluff	St. Tisljar	Secretary
	Kobe	Hall, J. Carey (Hall, John Carey)	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban		
	Nagasaki	J. H. Longford (Longford, Joseph Henry)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	H. M. Chalmers	Acting Consul
1901	**Tokyo Legation**	His Excellency d'Ambró (Adalbert Ambró von	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
	Kioi-cho,	Adamócz; B. d'Ambró-Adamocz; Adamóci Ambró	
	Kojimaki-ku, Tokyo	Béla)	
		Antoine de Grubissich Keresztur	Secretary
		K. Naruse	2md Interpreter
		Asahi Ikutaro (朝日幾太郎)	1st Interpreter
	Yokohama	Henry Jehlitschka (Heinrich Jehlitschka)	Acting Consul
	(Consulate)	St. Tisljar	Secretary
	No. 76/b., Bluff		
	Kobe	Hall, J. Carey (Hall, John Carey)	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban		
	Nagasaki	J. H. Longford (Longford, Joseph Henry)	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	F. W. W. Playfair	Acting Consul
1902	**Tokyo Legation**	His Excellency d'Ambró (Adalbert Ambró von	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
	Kioi-cho,	Adamócz; B. d'Ambró-Adamocz; Adamóci Ambró	
	Kojimaki-ku, Tokyo	Béla)	
		Prince Charles Schwarzenberg	Secretary
		K. Naruse	2nd Interpreter
		Asahi Ikutaro (朝日幾太郎)	1st Interpreter
	Yokohama	Max Kutschera	Consul
	(Consulate)	St. Tisljar	Secretary
	No. 76/b., Bluff	Kimura Moto (木村元)	Interpreter
	Kobe	Hall, J. Carey (Hall, John Carey)	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban		
	Nagasaki	R. G. E. Forster	Acting Consul
	Hakodate	A. E. Wileman	Acting Consul
1903	**Tokyo (Legation)**	His Excellency d'Ambró (Adalbert Ambró von	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
	Kioi-cho,	Adamócz; B. d'Ambró-Adamocz; Adamóci Ambró	
	Kojimaki-ku, Tokyo	Béla)	
		Heinrich Loewenthal von Linau	Secretary
		K. Naruse	2nd Interpreter
		Asahi Ikutaro (朝日幾太郎)	1st Interpreter
	Yokohama	Max Kutschera	Consul
	(Consulate)	Paul de Forster	Attaché
	No. 76/b., Bluff	St. Tisljar	Secretary (absent)
	Kobe	Hall, J. Carey (Hall, John Carey)	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban		
	Nagasaki	E. H. Holmes	Acting Consul
	6, Oura		
	Hakodate	R. G. E. Forster	Acting Consul
	Shimonoseki	F. W. Playfair	Acting Consul
1904	**Tokyo (Legation)**	His Excellency d'Ambró (Adalbert Ambró von	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
	Kioi-cho,	Adamócz; B. d'Ambró-Adamocz; Adamóci Ambró	
	Kojimaki-ku, Tokyo	Béla)	
		Heinrich Loewenthal von Linau	Secretary
		K. Naruse	2nd Interpreter

		Asahi Ikutaro (朝日幾太郎)	1st Interpreter
		Ct. H. Colloredo-Mannsfeld (Hieronymus Graf Colloredo-Mansfeld)	Naval Attaché
	Yokohama	Max Kutschera	Consul
	(Consulate)	Kimura Moto (木村元)	Interpreter
	No. 76/b., Bluff	Hans Seidl	Secretary
		Komatsubara Tokijiro (小松原時次郎)	Chancery Servant
	Kobe	E. A. Griffiths (Griffiths, Ernest Alfred)	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban,		
	Naniwa-machi		
	Nagasaki	R. de B. Layard	Acting Consul
	6, Oura		
	Hakodate	R. G. E. Forster	Acting Consul
	Shimonoseki	A. M. Chalmers	Acting Consul
	26, Akama-cho		
1905	**Tokyo (Legation)**	His Excellency d'Ambró (Adalbert Ambró von Adamócz; B. d'Ambró-Adamocz; Adamóci Ambró Béla)	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
	Kioi-cho,		
	Kojimaki-ku, Tokyo		
	Tel.: 1308	Heinrich Loewenthal von Linau	Secretary
		Capt. B. Dáni de Gyarmata (gyarmatai Dáni Béla)	Military Attaché
		Lt. E. Franz	Naval Attaché
		Ct. H. Colloredo-Mannsfeld (Hieronymus Graf Colloredo-Mansfeld)	Naval Attaché
		K. Naruse	2nd Interpreter
		Asahi Ikutaro (朝日幾太郎)	1st Interpreter
	Yokohama	General von Szathmáry-Király (Szathmáry-Király Domokos)	Consul
	(Consulate)		
	No. 76/b., Bluff	Yamamoto Takeshi	Interpreter
		A. Prohaska	Consular Chancery Councilor
		Prochaska Alajos	
		Sato Kiyoji (佐藤き代次)	Chancery Servant
		Komatsubara Tokijiro (小松原時次郎)	Chancery Servant
	Kobe	Henry Bonar	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban,		
	Naniwa-machi		
	Nagasaki	F. W. Playfair	Acting Consul
	6, Oura		
	Hakodate	R. G. E. Forster	Acting Consul
	Shimonoseki	E. A. Griffiths (Griffiths, Ernest Alfred)	Acting Consul
	26, Akama-cho		
1906	**Tokyo (Legation)**	His Excellency d'Ambró (Adalbert Ambró von Adamócz; B. d'Ambró-Adamocz; Adamóci Ambró Béla)	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
	Kioi-cho,		
	Kojimaki-ku, Tokyo		
		Otto Franz	1st Secretary
		Lieutenant de Vaisseau	Naval Attaché
		Ct. H. Colloredo-Mannsfeld (Hieronymus Graf Colloredo-Mansfeld)	Naval Attaché
		Capt. B. Dáni de Gyarmata (gyarmatai Dáni Béla)	Military Attaché
		K. Naruse	2nd Interpreter
		Asahi Ikutaro (朝日幾太郎)	1st Interpreter
	Yokohama	General von Szathmáry-Király (Szathmáry-Király Domokos)	Consul
	(Consulate)		
	No. 76/b., Bluff	Yamamoto Takeshi	Interpreter
		A. Prohaska (Prochaska Alajos)	Secretary
		Sato Kiyoji (佐藤き代次)	Chancery Servant
		Komatsubara Tokijiro (小松原時次郎)	Chancery Servant
	Kobe	Henry Bonar	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban,		
	Naniwa-machi		
	Nagasaki	Harold G. Parlett	Acting Consul
	6, Oura		
	Hakodate	R. G. E. Forster	Acting Consul
	68, Kaisho-machi		
	Shimonoseki	Hugh Horne	Acting Consul
	26, Akama-cho		
1907	**Tokyo (Legation)**	His Excellency d'Ambró (Adalbert Ambró von Adamócz; B. d'Ambró-Adamocz; Adamóci Ambró Béla)	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
	Kioi-cho,		
	Kojimaki-ku, Tokyo		
		Otto Franz	Secretary 1st Class
		Count K. Des Fours-Walderode (Monti és Anthienvillei Des Fours-Walderode Kuno)	Attaché
		Lieutenant de Vaisseau	Naval Attaché
		Ct. H. Colloredo-Mannsfeld (Hieronymus Graf Colloredo-Mansfeld)	Naval Attaché
		Capt. B. Dáni de Gyarmata (gyarmatai Dáni Béla)	Military Attaché (accredited to China as well)
		K. Naruse	Interpreter
		Asahi Ikutaro (朝日幾太郎)	Interpreter
	Yokohama	General von Szathmáry-Király (Szathmáry-Király Domokos)	2nd Class Consul General
	(Consulate)		
	No. 76/b., Bluff	Yamamoto Takeshi	Interpreter, Honorary Official
		A. Prohaska (Prochaska Alajos)	Consular Chancery Councilor
		Sato Kiyoji (佐藤き代次)	Chancery Servant
		Komatsubara Tokijiro (小松原時次郎)	Chancery Servant
	Kobe	Henry Bonar	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban,		
	Naniwa-machi		

	Nagasaki	Harold G. Parlett	Acting Consul
	6, Oura		
	Hakodate	R. G. E. Forster	Acting Consul
	68, Kaisho-machi		
	Shimonoseki	E. A. Griffiths (Griffiths, Ernest Alfred)	Acting Consul
	26, Akama-cho		
1908	**Tokyo (Embassy)**	His Excellency d'Ambró (Adalbert Ambró von Adamócz; B. d'Ambró-Adamocz; Adamóci Ambró Béla)	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
	Kioi-cho,		
	Kojimaki-ku, Tokyo	Otto Franz	Secretary 1st Class
		J. De Szilassy (Julius von Szilassy; báró szilasi és pilisi Szilassy Gyula)	2nd Class Councillor
		Count K. Des Fours-Walderode (Monti és Anthienvillei Des Fours-Walderode Kuno)	Attaché
		Capt. B. Dáni de Gyarmata (gyarmatai Dáni Béla)	Military Attaché (accredited to China as well)
		K. Naruse	Interpreter
		Asahi Ikutaro (朝日幾太郎)	Interpreter
	Yokohama	General von Szathmáry-Király (Szathmáry-Király Domokos)	Consul
	(Consulate)		
	No. 76/b., Bluff	Yamamoto Takeshi	Interpreter
		A. Prohaska	Secretary
		Sato Kiyoji (佐藤き代次)	Chancery Servant
		Komatsubara Tokijiro (小松原時次郎)	Chancery Servant
	Kobe	Henry Bonar	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban,		
	Naniwa-machi		
	Nagasaki	F. W. Playfair	Acting Consul
	6, Oura		
	Hakodate	E. L. S. Gordon	Acting Consul
	68, Kaisho-machi	John Will	Shipping clerk
		Hatana Shotaro	Clerk
	Shimonoseki	E. A. Griffiths (Griffiths, Ernest Alfred)	Acting Consul
	26, Akama-cho		
1909	**Tokyo (Embassy)**	Le Baron Guido de Call de Rosenburg et Culmbach (Guido Freiherr von Call zu Rosenburg und Culmbach; Rosenburgi és Culmbachi Call Guidó báró; Call-Rosenburg von und zu Kulmbach, Guido Frhr.)	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
	No. 7, Kioi-cho,		
	Kojimaki-ku, Tokyo	Le Baron Otto de Hoenning o'Carroll (Hoenning O'Carroll, Otto Frhr. von)	2nd Class Councillor
		J. De Szilassy (Julius von Szilassy; báró szilasi és pilisi Szilassy Gyula)	Councillor
		Count K. Des Fours-Walderode (Monti és Anthienvillei Des Fours-Walderode Kuno)	Attaché
		Capt. B. Dáni de Gyarmata (Gyarmatai Dáni Béla)	Military Attaché (accredited to China as well)
		K. Naruse	Interpreter
		Asahi Ikutaro (朝日幾太郎)	Interpreter
	Yokohama	E. von Zach	Acting Consul
	(Consulate)	Yamamoto Takeshi	Interpreter
	No. 76/b., Bluff	A. Prohaska (Prochaska Alajos)	Secretary
		Sato Kiyoji (佐藤き代次)	Chancery Servant
		Komatsubara Tokijiro (小松原時次郎)	Chancery Servant
	Kobe	Henry Bonar	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban,		
	Naniwa-machi		
	Nagasaki	F. W. Playfair	Acting Consul
	6, Oura		
	Hakodate	Harold G. Parlett	Acting Consul
	68, Kaisho-machi		
	Shimonoseki	E. A. Griffiths (Griffiths, Ernest Alfred)	Acting Consul
	26, Akama-cho		
1910	**Tokyo (Embassy)**	Le Baron Guido de Call de Rosenburg et Culmbach (Guido Freiherr von Call zu Rosenburg und Culmbach; Rosenburgi és Culmbachi Call Guidó báró; Call-Rosenburg von und zu Kulmbach, Guido Frhr.)	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
	No. 7, Kioi-cho,		
	Kojimaki-ku, Tokyo	Le Baron Otto de Hoenning o'Carroll (Hoenning O'Carroll, Otto Frhr. von)	1st Class Councillor
		Count K. Des Fours-Walderode (Monti és Anthienvillei Des Fours-Walderode Kuno)	2nd Secretary
		Capt. B. Dáni de Gyarmata (Gyarmatai Dáni Béla)	Military Attaché (accredited to China as well)
		E. I. Pfann (Pfann Ede)	Chief of the Chancery (Councillor)
		M. Ernest Janotta (Janota Ernő)	Attaché
		Asahi Ikutaro (朝日幾太郎)	1st Interpreter
	Yokohama	H. F. Koller (Koller Ármin; Hermann Koller)	Consul
	(Consulate)	Yamamoto Takeshi	Interpreter, Honorary Official
	No. 74., Bluff	Kawanaka Osamu (川中道)	Interpreter
		A. Prohaska (Prochaska Alajos)	Secretary, Consular Chancery Councilor
		Shiina Toyokichi	Chancery Servant
		Sato Kiyoji (佐藤き代次)	Chancery Servant
		Komatsubara Tokijiro (小松原時次郎)	Chancery Servant
	Kobe	Henry Bonar	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban,		
	Naniwa-machi		
	Nagasaki	A. M. Chalmers	Acting Consul
	6, Oura		

	Hakodate	Harold G. Parlett	Acting Consul
	68, Kaisho-machi		
	Shimonoseki	E. A. Griffiths (Griffiths, Ernest Alfred)	Acting Consul
	26, Akama-cho		
1911	**Tokyo (Embassy)**	Le Baron Guido de Call de Rosenburg et Culmbach	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
	No. 7, Kioi-cho,	(Guido Freiherr von Call zu Rosenburg und	
	Kojimaki-ku, Tokyo	Culmbach; Rosenburgi és Culmbachi Call Guidó	
		báró; Call-Rosenburg von und zu Kulmbach, Guido	
		Frhr.)	
		Le Baron Otto de Hoenning o'Carroll	Councillor
		(Hoenning O'Carroll, Otto Frhr. von)	
		M. Ernest Janotta (Janota Ernő)	Attaché
		Captain Franz Putz (Putz Ferenc)	Military Attaché (accredited to China as well)
		E. I. Pfann (Pfann Ede)	Chief of the Chancery, Councillor
		Asahi Ikutaro (朝日幾太郎)	1st Interpreter
	Yokohama	H. F. Koller (Koller Ármin; Hermann Koller)	Consul
	(Consulate)	Hans Lambertz (Lambertz János)	Officer
	No. 74., Bluff	Yamasaki Sunao	Interpreter
		A. Prohaska (Prochaska Alajos)	Secretary, Consular Chancery Councilor
		Hirono Yonekichi	Chancery Servant
		Sato Kiyoji (佐藤き代次)	Chancery Servant
	Kobe	R. de B. Layard	Acting Consul
	Ku-ban,		
	Naniwa-machi		
	Nagasaki	A. M. Chalmers	Acting Consul
	6, Oura		
	Hakodate	W. M. Royds	Acting Consul
	68, Kaisho-machi		
	Shimonoseki	E. A. Griffiths (Griffiths, Ernest Alfred)	Acting Consul
	26, Akama-cho		
1912	**Tokyo (Embassy)**	Szentgyörgyi Müller László (Ladislaus Müller de	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary (Envoy
	No. 7, Kioi-cho,	Szentgyörgy, Ladislaus Freiherr Müller von	Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary with the diplomatic
	Kojimaki-ku, Tokyo	Szentgyörgy)	representation of the Monarchy at the royal Siamese court)
		Baron George von und zu Franckenstein (Georg	2nd Class Councillor (ad interim)
		Freiherr von und zu Franckenstein; Franckensteini	
		Franckenstein György)	
		M. Ernest Janotta (Janota Ernő)	Attaché
		Biegeleben Ottó	1st Class Court and Ministerial Drafter
		Captain Franz Putz (Putz Ferenc)	Military Attaché
		F. Hanny (Hanny Ferenc)	Head of Chancery
		Asahi Ikutaro (朝日幾太郎)	1st Interpreter
		Winternitz Konrád	Dragoman
	Yokohama	Darvastói Szentirmay Béla	Consul
	(Consulate)	Yamasaki Sunao	Interpreter
	No. 76/b., Bluff	Hans Lambertz (Lambertz János)	Secretary
		Hugo Schumpeter	?
		Hirono Yonekichi	Chancery Servant
		Sato Kiyoji (佐藤き代次)	Chancery Servant
	Kobe	Egon Crevatin	Honorary Consul
	Ku-ban,		
	Naniwa-machi		
	Nagasaki	A. M. Chalmers	Acting Consul
	6, Oura		
	Hakodate	E. L. S. Gordon	Acting Consul
	68, Kaisho-machi		
	Shimonoseki	E. A. Griffiths (Griffiths, Ernest Alfred)	Acting Consul
	26, Akama-cho		
1913	**Tokyo (Embassy)**	Szentgyörgyi Müller László (Ladislaus Müller de	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary (Envoy
	No. 7, Kioi-cho,	Szentgyörgy, Ladislaus Freiherr Müller von	Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary with the diplomatic
	Kojimaki-ku, Tokyo	Szentgyörgy)	representation of the Monarchy at the royal Siamese court)
		Liptószentiváni Szent-Iványi Móric	Secretary of Legation, with the title of Counselor of Legation
		Przerabi Hauenschield Bauer Jenő	Attaché
		Winternitz Konrád	Dragoman
		F. Hanny	Chancery Clerk
		Hanny Ferenc	
		Captain Franz Putz	Military and Naval Attaché
		Putz Ferenc	
	Yokohama	Darvastói Szentirmay Béla	Consul, with the title and rank of Consul General
	(Consulate)	Mitura Frigyes	Consular Chancery Clerk
	No. 76/b., Bluff	Yanagisawa Kason	Interpreter
	Kobe	Egon Crevatin	Honorary Consul
	Ku-ban,		
	Naniwa-machi		

On 27 August 1914, diplomatic relations between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Japan were cut off.

Japan's Diplomatic Representation in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy

Year	Legation, Consulate and Embassy	Name (Japanese names: as they appear in the sources; Hungarian names: including other variants)	Position, remarks
1873	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Sano Tsunetami (佐野常民)	Minister Plenipotentiary
		H. Watanabe	First secretary
1874	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Sano Tsunetami (佐野常民)	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
1875	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Aoki Shuzo (青木周蔵)	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; accredited to Germany as well
		Watanabe Koki (渡辺洪基)	Secretary of Legation
		Tanaka Kensaburo (田中 建三郎)	Legation Assistant
		Soeda Setsu	Legation Clerk
		Tojo Hiro	Legation Clerk
1876	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Aoki Shuzo (青木周蔵)	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; accredited to Germany as well
1877	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Aoki Shuzo 青木 周蔵	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; accredited to Germany as well
1878	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna** Reisnerstrasse 38.	Aoki Shuzo 青木 周蔵	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; accredited to Germany as well
1879	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna** Reisnerstrasse 38.	Aoki Shuzo 青木 周蔵	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; accredited to Germany as well
1880	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Ida Yuzuru 井田 譲	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
		Honma Kiyoo 本間 清雄	Secretary of Legation
		Tsuji Shunjuro	Military Attaché
	Consulate, Trieste	George Huetterott	Honorary Consul
1881	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Ida Yuzuru 井田 譲	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
		Tsuji Shunjuro	Military Attaché
1882	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Ueno Kagenori 上野 景範	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
		Tsuji Shunjuro	Military Attaché
1883	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Ueno Kagenori 上野 景範	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
1884	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Ueno Kagenori 上野 景範	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
1885	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Saionji Kinmochi 西園寺 公望	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
1886	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Saionji Kinmochi 西園寺 公望	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
	Consulate, Trieste	George Huetterott	Honorary Consul
1887	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Count Toda Ujitomo 戸田 氏共	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
1888	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna** Lotharingerstrasse 5.	Count Toda Ujitomo 戸田 氏共	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
		Gunzhi Funakoshi	Secretary
		Sakuya-Wuno	Attaché
	Consulate, Trieste	George Huetterott	Honorary Consul
1889	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Count Toda Ujitomo 戸田 氏共	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
1890	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Count Toda Ujitomo 戸田 氏共	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; at the same time accredited to the Swiss Confederation
		Takahashi Gunji 棚橋 軍次	Secretary
		Amano Kojiro 天野 瑚次郎	Secretary
		Viscount Toda Kotai	Attaché
1891	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Watanabe Hiromoto 渡辺 洪基	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; at the same time accredited to the Swiss Confederation
1892	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Watanabe Hiromoto 渡辺 洪基	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; at the same time accredited to the Swiss Confederation
		Amano Kojiro 天野 瑚次郎	Secretary
1893	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Oyama Tsunesuke (Tsunasuke?) 大山 綱介	Chargé d'affaires, Secretary

1894	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Oyama Tsunesuke (Tsunasuke?) 大山 綱介	Chargé d'affaires
	I. Fichtegasse 2.	Hata Ryotaro 畑 良太郎	Secretary
1895	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Sugimura Koichi 杉村 虎一	Chargé d'affaires
	I. Fichtegasse 2.	Hata Ryotaro 畑 良太郎	Secretary
1896	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Takahira Kogoro 高平 小五郎	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; at the same time accredited to the Swiss Confederation
	I. Fichtegasse 2a.	Sugimura Koichi 杉村 虎一	Secretary, Chargé d'affaires
		Ohara Tsutou	Military Attaché
1897	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Takahira Kogoro 高平 小五郎	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; at the same time accredited to the Swiss Confederation
		Sugimura Koichi 杉村 虎一	Secretary 1st Class
		Hata Ryotaro 畑 良太郎	Secretary 2nd Class
		Major Hara Dan	Military Attaché
		Ohara Tsutou	Military Attaché
1898	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Takahira Kogoro 高平 小五郎	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; at the same time accredited to the Swiss Confederation
		Sugimura Koichi 杉村 虎一	Secretary 1st Class
		Hata Ryotaro 畑 良太郎	Secretary 2nd Class
		Fujii Shigeta	Military Attaché
1899	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Makino Nobuaki 牧野 伸顕	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; at the same time accredited to the Swiss Confederation
		Yoshida Sakuya 吉田 作弥	Secretary 1st Class
		Amano Kinosuke	Secretary 2nd Class
		Fujii Shigeta	Military Attaché
1900	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Makino Nobuaki 牧野 伸顕	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; at the same time accredited to the Swiss Confederation
		Yoshida Sakuya 吉田 作弥	Secretary 1st Class
		Amano Kinosuke	Secretary 2nd Class
		Fujii Shigeta	Military Attaché
1901	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Makino Nobuaki 牧野 伸顕	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; at the same time accredited to the Swiss Confederation
		Major Yoda Shokei	Military Attaché
1902	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Makino Nobuaki 牧野 伸顕	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; at the same time accredited to the Swiss Confederation
		Yoshida Sakuya 吉田 作弥	Secretary 1st Class
		Nishi Genshiro 西 源四郎	Secretary 2nd Class
		Hida Heijiro	Secretary 2nd Class
		Major Yoda Shokei	Military Attaché
	Consulate, Trieste	George Huetterott	Honorary Consul
1903	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Makino Nobuaki 牧野 伸顕	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; at the same time accredited to the Swiss Confederation
		Yoshida Sakuya 吉田 作弥	Secretary 1st Class
		Nishi Genshiro 西 源四郎	Secretary 2nd Class
		Hida Heijiro	Secretary 2nd Class
		Major Yoda Shokei	Military Attaché
		Major Fukuda Masataro	Military Attaché
	Consulate, Trieste	George Huetterott	Honorary Consul
1904	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Makino Nobuaki 牧野 伸顕	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; at the same time accredited to the Swiss Confederation
		Yoshida Sakuya 吉田 作弥	Secretary 1st Class
		Nishi Genshiro 西 源四郎	Secretary 2nd Class
		Hida Heijiro	Secretary 2nd Class
		Major Yoda Shokei	Military Attaché
		Major Fukuda Masataro	Military Attaché
	Consulate, Trieste	George Huetterott	Honorary Consul
1905	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Makino Nobuaki 牧野 伸顕	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; at the same time accredited to the Swiss Confederation
	I. Albrechtgasse 3.	Yoshida Sakuya 吉田 作弥	Secretary 1st Class
		Nishi Genshiro 西 源四郎	Secretary 2nd Class
		Funakoshi Mitsunojo	Secretary 2nd Class
		Major Sohoji (Johoji) Goro	Military Attaché
		Ide Takeo	Chancellor
	Consulate, Trieste	George Huetterott	Honorary Consul
1906	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Makino Nobuaki 牧野 伸顕	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary; at the same time accredited to the Swiss Confederation
	I. Albrechtgasse 3.		

		Nishi Genshiro 西 源四郎	Secretary 1st Class
		Funakoshi Mitsunojo	Secretary 2nd Class
		Lt.-Col. Sohoji Goro	Military Attaché
		Lt.-Col. Yamanashi Hanzo	Military Attaché
	Consulate, Trieste	George Huetterott	Honorary Consul
	Consulate, Vienna	Felix Fisher	Honorary Consul
1907	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Nishi Genshiro 西 源四郎	Chargé d'affaires ad interim
		Kikuchi Yoshiro	Attaché
		Lt.-Col. Yamanashi Hanzo	Military Attaché
	Consulate, Trieste	George Huetterott	Honorary Consul
	Consulate, Vienna	Felix Fisher	Honorary Consul
1908	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Uchida Yasuya 内田 康哉	Ambassador
	I. Albrechtgasse 3.	Nishi Genshiro 西 源四郎	Secretary 1st Class
		Okuda Takematsu 奥田 竹松	Secretary 3rd Class
		Kikuchi Yoshiro/(Giro?)	Attaché
		Lt.-Col. Fukuda Gataro/Masataro 福田 雅太郎	Military Attaché
		Mori Shimichi	Clerk
	Consulate, Trieste	George Huetterott	Honorary Consul
	Consulate, Vienna	Felix Fisher	Honorary Consul
1909	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Uchida Yasuya 内田 康哉	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
	III. Salesianergasse 11.	Okuda Takematsu 奥田 武松	Chargé d'Affaires
		Nishi Genshiro 西 源四郎	Secretary 1st Class
		Okuyama Kiyoji 奥山清治	Attaché
		Lt.-Col. Fukuda Gataro/Masataro 福田 雅太郎	Military Attaché
		Capt. Hyakutake Saburo	Naval Attaché
		Mori Shimichi	Clerk
	Consulate, Trieste	George Huetterott	Honorary Consul
	Consulate, Vienna	Felix Fisher	Honorary Consul
1910	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Akizuki Satoo 秋月 左都夫	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
	III. Salesianergasse 11.	Nishi Genshiro 西 源四郎	Secretary 1st Class
		Okuda Takematsu 奥田 竹松	Secretary 2nd Class
		Okuyama Kiyoji (Seiji) 奥山清治	Secretary 3rd Class
		Lt.-Col. Fukuda Gataro 福田 雅太郎	Military Attaché
		Capt. Hyakutake Saburo	Naval Attaché
		Yoshioka Kensaku	Assistant to the Military Attaché
		Mori Shinichi	Clerk
	Consulate, Trieste	George Huetterott	Honorary Consul
	Consulate, Vienna	Felix Fisher	Honorary Consul
	Consulate, Budapest	Edmond von Palotay (Várpalotai Palotay Ödön)	Honorary Consul
1911	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Akizuki Satoo 秋月 左都夫	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
		Shinobu Shinpei (Junpei?) 信夫 淳平	Secretary 1st Class
		Okuda Takematsu 奥田 竹松	Secretary 2nd Class
		Okuyama Kiyoji (Seiji) 奥山清治	Secretary 3rd Class
		Lt.-Col. Morioka Morinari (Morishige)	Military Attaché
		Commander Matsuoka Shizuo 松岡 静雄	Naval Attaché
		Yoshioka Kensaku	Assistant to the Military Attaché
	Consulate, Vienna	Felix Fisher	Honorary Consul
	Consulate, Budapest V. Báthory u. 7.	Edmond von Palotay (Várpalotai Palotay Ödön)	Honorary Consul
1912	**H.I.J.M.'s Legation in Vienna**	Akizuki Satoo 秋月 左都夫	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, accredited to the Swiss Confederation as well
	III. Salesianergasse 11.	Shinobu Junpei (Shinpei?) 信夫 淳平	Secretary 1st Class
		Okuyama Kiyoji (Seiji) 奥山清治	Secretary 3rd Class
		Major Hotta Shoichi	Military Attaché
		Commander Matsuoka Shizuo 松岡 静雄	Naval Attaché
		Major Terauchi Hisaichi	Assistant to the Military Attaché

Consulate-general, Vienna	Felix Fisher	Honorary Consul
Consulate, Budapest	Edmond von Palotay	Honorary Consul
II. Nyul utca 13/a.	(Várpalotai Palotay Ödön)	
Consulate, Zurich	Hermann Madory	Honorary Consul

From 1913, Nishi Genshiro served as Japan's chargé d'affaires ad interim.

Austro-Hungarian warships in Japan

Year		Name of the warship
1869.	Sept. 6. (16.)–Nov. 4. (28.)	Donau and Erzherzog Friedrich
1871.	Dec. 15. – **1872**. Jan. 25	Fasana
1883.	July 29. – Aug. 4.	Albatros
1884.	June 29. – Sept. 3.	Nautilus
1886.	June 11. – Oct. 12.	Aurora
1887.	July 5. – Sept. 1.	Fasana
1891.	Sept. 6. – Sept. 24.	Fasana
1893.	Aug. 2. – Sept. 16.	Kaiserin Elisabeth
1895.	Aug. 22. – Oct. 2.	Saida
	Sept. 30. – Nov. 16.	Aurora
1896.	Oct. 22. – **1897**. Jan. 14.	Panther
1897.	July 28. – Sept. 30.	Panther
1898.	July 31. – Oct. 3.	Frundsberg
1899.	May 20. – Aug. 22.	Kaiserin Elisabeth
1900.	May 14. – May 31.	Zenta
	Sept. 28. – Oct. 1.	Kaiserin Elisabeth
	Oct. 10. – Nov. 7.	Kaiserin Elisabeth
	Nov. 24. – 1901. Jan. 6.	Zenta
	Nov. 28. – **1901.** Jan. 5.	Aspern
	Dec. 6. – **1901**. Mar. 4.	Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia
1901.	Jan. 4. – Feb. 4.	Kaiserin Elisabeth
	March 16. – Apr. 23.	Leopard
	Apr. 30. – May 21.	Donau
	May 9. – May 17.	Kaiserin Elisabeth
	May 9. – May 16.	Zenta
	Sept. 18. – Oct. 30.	Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia
	Oct. 21. – Dec. 16.	Zenta
	Oct. 21. – **1902**. Jan. 2.	Aspern
1902.	May 23. – June 2.	Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia
	June 18. – Aug. 5.	Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia
1903.	Jan. 10. – Feb. 28.	Kaiser Karl VI.
	May. 1. – May. 31.	Kaiser Karl VI.
1904.	Apr. 25. – May 26.	Panther
	June 28. – Aug. 23.	Kaiserin Elisabeth
	Oct. 18. – Dec. 3.	Kaiserin Elisabeth
1905.	June 19. – Sept. 3.	Kaiserin Elisabeth
	Nov. 19. – Dec. 18.	Kaiser Franz Joseph I
1906.	Apr. 25. – May 26.	Panther
	June 26. – July 28.	Kaiser Franz Joseph I
	Sept. 16. – Nov. 15.	Kaiser Franz Joseph I
1907.	March 11. – 13.	Kaiser Franz Joseph I
	June 6. – Sept. 4.	Kaiser Franz Joseph I
	Sept. 20. – Sept. 24.	Kaiser Franz Joseph I
1908.	March 9. – May 29.	Kaiser Franz Joseph I
	May 22. – Sept. 24.	Leopard
	July 30. – Sept. 5.	Kaiser Franz Joseph I
	Oct. 27. – Nov. 29.	Leopard

1909.	Apr. 6. – Apr. 12.	Panther
	June 3. – Sept. 3.	Kaiserin Elisabeth
	Nov. 7. – Nov. 20.	Kaiserin Elisabeth
1910.	Jan. 20. – Apr. 16.	Panther
	May. 10. – Aug. 22.	Kaiserin Elisabeth
	March 8. – Oct. 15.	Kaiser Franz Joseph I
1911	March 8. – May 22.	Kaiser Franz Joseph I
	Sept. 30. – Oct. 15.	Kaiser Franz Joseph I
1912.	Sept. 2. – Sept. 27.	Kaiser Franz Joseph I
1913.	Nov. 4. – Dec. 15.	Kaiserin Elisabeth

Naval cadets dressed in 'Japanese attire' on board the SMS Fasana corvette (private collection)

Japanese Literature Translated into Hungarian

(**1**) translations of Japanese works (via intermediary languages, such as Dutch, German, French, English); (**2**) Western works on Japanese subjects translated into Hungarian (or, published in its original language); (**3**) and Hungarian translations of original Japanese literature (including Hungarian works of pseudo-Japanese literature)

Title, Publisher, Year of publication	Type (1/2/3)	Original (translated from)	Notes
Usge und Zacchi / Muzárion / 1829[271]	2	Gottlieb Konrad Pfaffel (in German)	based on imaginary Japanese subjects, in prose form
Japáni táncz és ének (Japanese dance and song) / Társalkodó / 1832[272] (another translation appeared in Nefelejts in 1860)	2	Felix Meijlan's travel account (from German)	Meijlan, who lived in Nagasaki from 1827 to 1830, recorded the verse – likely from memory and with strong Dutch linguistic influence – making it difficult to treat as original Japanese text[273]
Japán birodalom (The Japanese Empire) / 1836	2	translation of the work of the German orientalist Heinrich Julius Klaproth	
Yoridala / Aurora: Hazai almanach / 1837.[274]	2	based on Christian travel chronicles	a fictional story set in Meaco (Kyoto) during the persecution of Christians after 1597
(three-part article) / Hon és Külföld / 1841[275]	2	based on Philipp Franz von Siebold's Manners and Customs of the Japanese	one section of this report constitutes the first Hungarian presentation of the Kojiki
A rabnő dala (The Song of the Slave Girl) / Literatura / 1860[276]	3		a fictitious Japanese poem
A negyvenhét ronin (The Forty-Seven Ronin) / Vasárnapi Újság / 1871[277]	2	Algernon Bertram Mitford's two-volume work Tales of Old Japan, published that same year	the first Hungarian translation of the literary rendition of this well-known and frequently adapted historical event

[271] Gottlieb Konrad Pfaffel: *Usge und Zacchi*. Muzárion 3. 13. rész, 1829. pp. 68–70.
[272] Társalkodó, 1, 70, 1832. szeptember 1.
[273] Magazin für die Literatur des Auslandes, 1, 16, 1832. March. 7. p. 61.
[274] Vajda Péter: *Yoridala*. Aurora: Hazai almanach, 1837. pp. 311–374.
[275] Hon és Külföld 1., 50. sz., 1841. pp. 198–199.
[276] Literatura 44. 2018. pp. 343–359, 348–349.
[277] Vasárnapi Újság 18, 43. sz. 1871. pp. 534–535.; Vasárnapi Újság 18, 44. sz. 1871. pp. 546–547.; Vasárnapi Újság 18, 45. sz. 1871. pp. 558–559.

Bunbuku Chagama (分福茶釜), or The Bubbling Teapot / Budapesti Szemle / 1873[278]	1	Edward Howard House's translations in English	an excerpt from a kabuki play
Ikaku és Szaj-szaku (Ikaku and Saisaku) / Vasárnapi Újság / 1879[279]	1	Bakin Takizawa's Edo-period novel (美濃旧衣八丈綺, 1814)	the anonymous translator acknowledged only a French source[280]
Sin-sin / Magyar Polgár / 1883[281]	1		the first Hungarian version of Taketori monogatari, though its heavily distorted text and inconsistent transcription suggest it likely passed through multiple intermediary languages
Japanese folk song / Összehasonlító Irodalomtörténeti Lapok (Comparative Literary History Journal) / 1884[282]	1	The closest known original source of the poem is a Japanese folk song (地がち唄)	
Japanese "folk tale" / Ország-Világ / 1884[283]	1		derived from a flawed French imitation rather than from an original Japanese source
Japanese poetry / Pesti Napló / 1885	1		a review of Judith Gautier's book Poèmes de la Libellule
a comprehensive overview of Japan / 1897[284]	1	Emil and Lenore Selenka's travelogue: Sonnige Welten (1896)	summarized major literary works (such as Taketori monogatari, the story of Chūjō-hime, and creation myths), and included what was presented as the first Hungarian translation of a classical Japanese poem attributed to the 17th-century haikai poet Kikaku Takarai (also known as Kikaku Enomoto)
Japanese tales / Szt. István Társulat / 1901[285]	1	David Brauns's 1885 German volume: Japanische Märchen und Sagen	
A Pásztor és a Királylány (The Shepherd and the Princess), a	?		

[278] Budapesti Szemle 1. köt., 2. sz. 1873. pp. 415–435.
[279] Vasárnapi Újság, 26, 51, 1879. pp. 7–8.
[280] Le Monde illustré, 20, 1170, 1879. pp. 136–138.
[281] Magyar Polgár, 17, 245, 1883. október. 24. pp. 1–2.
[282] *Összehasonlító Irodalmi Lapok*, Kolozsvár, 1884., p. 2522., 2555.
[283] Ország-Világ, 5, 47, 1884. p. 756.
[284] Czirbusz Géza: *A keleti földségi csoport északi kontinensei 2.* In Balbi Adorján (szerk.): Balbi Adorján egyetemes földrajza: 4/2 - Független államok, Nagybecskerek, Pleitz Ferenc Pál Könyvnyomdája, 1897. pp. 978–979.
Borneo-Java-Sumatra-Vorderindien-Ceylon-Japan. Wiesbaden, C. W. Kreidel, 1896. pp. 341–359.
[285] Akantisz Viktor: *Japán mesék az ifjúság számára* Bp., Szt. István Társulat, 1901.

Japanese folk tale / Debreczeni Újság / 1902[286]			
a short introduction to Japanese literature / Egyetemes Irodalomtörténet / 1903[287]	1	Kojiki, Nihonshoki, Manyoshū, and Kokin Wakashū; several shorter poems along with two 14th-century song collections	
Japanese poems / Szalon Újság / 1903[288]	1	催馬楽, saibara	
Japanese elegy / Vasárnapi Újság / 1903 [289]	1		translated from German
Japanese poems / 1904	1	Karl Florenz's collection of translations entitled Dichtergrüsse aus dem Osten (Greetings from the East)	
Japanese literature / Jövendő / 1904	?		entire issue on Japan
Japanese poetry / Budapesti Hírlap, Resicai Lapok, Új Idők / 1904	1	Man'yōshū and the Kokinshū, as well as from then-new tanka poems published in newspapers	
Az ószákai férfiak / A Hét / 1904[290]	3		novella
Japanese folktales / Budapesti Szemle / 1904[291]	3	Urashima Tarō, Taketori monogatari (The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter), Momotarō and The Fisherman's Hook	Benedek Balogh Barátosi's translations from Japanese
Zeami Motokiyo: The Feathered Robe [Hagoromo] / Budapesti Szemle / 1904[292]	3		translated by Benedek Balogh Barátosi
(articles introducing Japanese authors) / Alkotmány / 1904[293]	?	Kyokutei Bakin and Matsuo Bashō	
Japanese literature / Magyar Szemle / 1906	1	Paul Enderling: Japanische Novellen und Gedichte. 1905	entire issue on Japan: covering Japanese–Hungarian relations, a Japanese fairy tale and other fictional

286 Debreczeni Újság 1902. 10. 19

287 Fiók Károly: *Japán*. In Heinrich G. (szerk.): Egyetemes Irodalomtörténet I., Budapest, Franklin Társulat, 1903. pp. 147–152.

288 Rexa Dezső: *A japán költészet gyöngyeiből*. Szalon Újság, 1903. jan. 15. p. 10.

289 Vasárnapi Újság, 1903. dec. 20. 51. sz., 50. évf.

290 Cholnoky Viktor: *Az oszákai férfiak*. A Hét 1904., p. 374.

291 *Urashimataro: A legrégibb japán ősmese*, ford. [Barátosi] Balogh Benedek, Budapesti Szemle 117. köt., 326. sz. 1904. pp. 312–330.; *Taketori monogatari: (Regényes elbeszélés)*, ford. [Barátosi] Balogh Benedek, Budapesti Szemle 118. köt., 329. sz. 1904. pp. 202–230.; *Momotaro: (Barackfi)*, ford. [Barátosi] Balogh Benedek, Budapesti Szemle 120. köt., 336. sz. 1904. pp. 388–396.; *A halászhorog*, ford. [Barátosi] Balogh Benedek, Budapesti Szemle 120. köt., 336. sz. 1904. 397–406.

292 Budapesti Szemle 123. köt., 344. sz. 1905. pp. 261–273.

293 Alkotmány, 1904. dec. 25., pp. 19–20; Hazánk, 1905. október 8., p. 4.

			works, and translations of Japanese poems
comprehensive summary of Japanese literature in Dai Nippon vol. III. / 1906[294]	3	Japanese works, translated from Japanese	For financial reasons, Benedek Balogh Barátosi was forced to publish his work in a somewhat abridged form. It is regrettable that his work on Japanese literary history, shortened by ten printed pages, could not be published in its entirety. We also know that Barátosi had material sufficient for at least two separate volumes of literary translations.
Inoue Tetsujiro: Őszirózsa. / Révai-Salamon / 1907[295]	1	Tetsujirō Inoue's narrative poems, but also a few poems from classical Japanese anthologies and modern poetry	the first entire volume of Japanese poetry in Hungarian; translations are based on Karl Florenz' translation
Japanese fairy tale A pillangó (The Butterfly) / Debreczeni Újság / 1909[296]	?		
Régi japán költők (Old Japanese Poets) / Alkotmány / 1910[297]	1		Tanka poems
Japán dalok és mesék (Japanese Songs and Tales) / Az Újság / 1910[298]	1	English works by James Curtis Hepburn, Basil Hall Chamberlain, and David Thompson	
Poems by Mutsuhito and Haruko / Kultura / 1912[299]	1	Mitteilungen des Seminars für orientalischen Sprachen an der königlichen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Berlin, 1910.	The first Hungarian translations of the poems of the Japanese emperor and empress
Japanese poems / Magyarország / 1913[300]	1		
A Japán csalogány (The Japanese Nightingale) / Új Idők / 1913	2	Onoto Watanna / Winnifred Eaton's novel	

[294] Barátosi Balogh Benedek: *Dai Nippon III. Irodalom.* Budapest, 1906.
[295] Inoue Tetsujiro: *Őszirózsa. Japán éposz és még néhány kisebb lírai költemény*. Budapest, Révai-Salamon, 1907.
[296] Debreczeni Újság 1909.08.26.
[297] Alkotmány, 1910. június 9., p. 1.
[298] Az Újság, 1910. augusztus 31., p. 1.
[299] Dr. Ágner Lajos: *A japán császár mint költő*. In: Kultura irodalmi művészeti kritikai képes havi folyóirat, 1912., pp. 664-665.
[300] Magyarország, 1913. 304. szám p. 37.;Pesti Napló, 1913. március 23., p. 46; Pesti Napló, 1913. dec. 21., p. 38.

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The extensive digitized archive (approximately 20 GB in size), comprising primary and secondary sources as well as other valuable but as yet unused materials collected over two decades of research on the period, is available to researchers upon request.

Biography

Gergely TOTH (トート・ゲルゲイ) is a Hungarian Japan Studies researcher, an incurably curious mind, and a sworn enemy of fluff and empty posturing who has maintained his independence while occasionally poking his curious little nose into the more esteemed corners of academia. He received his MA in Japanese Studies from *Gaspar Karoli University of the Reformed Church* in Budapest, Hungary. He spent 2 years as a *Monbusho Scholarship* recipient at *Waseda University* in Tokyo, where he studied International Relations at the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies. His interdisciplinary research revolves around the history of relations between Hungary in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Meiji+Taisho-era Japan during the 1869-1913 period. Gergely is also interested in the perceptions about Japan in Europe. Currently, he is working on the re-evaluation, demystification, objectivation of early and contemporary European-Japanese and Hungaro-Japanese relations, by applying a critical approach. Gergely extensively published articles about his research in leading Hungarian online news outlets (qubit.hu, 444.hu, hang.hu), an online history site (ujkor.hu), and a renowned history magazine (BBC History Magyarország). He was interviewed on leading media sites (mandiner.hu, 24.hu), history-, or Japan-focused podcasts (Ablak Japánra, Ratio Podcast, Impakták, Orient Expressz), radio stations (Kossuth Rádió, Civil Rádió). Additionally, he has created a dozen various edu-tainment activities and workshops related to his research, and co-curated the exhibition *Touch of Japan* at Ybl Budai Kreatív Ház (Budapest). He has delivered lectures at Erfurt University (Germany), SOAS Japan Centre London, Ca' Foscari University (Venice), Masaryk University (Brno), the Nissan Institute at Oxford University, Vienna University, ELTE (Budapest), and Tokyo University as an invited speaker.

Link to Gergely Tóth's monograph (***Japán-Magyar Kapcsolattörténet 1869-1913***, Gondolat Kiadó, 2018.) in Hungarian: https://payhip.com/b/ZHOA1

Invited lectures, edutainment events, co-curated exhibitions, conference appearances (2013-2025):

(in the occasional event of future link rot, try using the Wayback Machine at archive.org by copying and pasting the link)

2025 Oct.: Habsburg Central Europe in Global History Summer School, @Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague (in-person presentation)

2025 MAY: "Exploring the Early History of Japan-Hungary Relations (1869 – 1913)" @InformAsia Community (online lecture) https://vimeo.com/1085831606#t=0

2025 Jan: "Populist Self-validating through the Mirror of the Other: The Utilization of the notion of Japan in Current Hungarian State-led Ideological Discourses" @Erfurt University, Germany (in-person lecture)

2024 Nov: "From Japanology to Japanese Studies: Status, Evolution and Challenges" @The Japan Research Centre (JRC), SOAS, London (in-person lecture) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pe9zx4f4Bng

2024 June: "Circulating Pseudo-Scientific Notions of Hungarian-Japanese Kinship" Conference Presentation at "Rewriting the History: Changing the Reading of the Past" @Charles University, Prague (in-person presentation)

2024 JAN: "From Japanology to Japanese Studies: A Brief Overview of Status, Evolution, Challenges, and Embedded Japanophilia Within" Studentische Konferenz europäischer Japanologie @ University of Vienna (in-person presentation)

2023 Nov: "Polygraphing and de-orientalizing Eurocentric perceptions of Japan" Masaryk University, Brno (in-person lecture)

2023 Oct: "Polygraphing Hungarian Perceptions of Japan
in a Global-Historical Context, with some Italian references and examples" Ca' Foscari University, Venice, Italy (in-person lecture) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMJ84o7f4GA

2023 March: "Polygraphing the Japan-perceptions in Hungary" Lecture in Hungarian @College of Social Theory, Corvinus University, Budapest

2022 Nov: Lecture on the roots of Hungarian-Japanese Cultural Relations (Diplomacy & Beyond Lecture Series) @Institute for Cultural Relations Policy Budapest (online lecture) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVv5CQeL_zk

2022 Oct: Distant Cousins, or What You Will @ELTE PPK, Budapest (in-person lecture)

2022 May: Modern Japan History Workshop: Distant Cousins, or What You Will - Deconstructing a subcultural belief in the history of Japanese-Hungarian Bilateral Relations @University of Tokyo (online lecture)

2022 March: History of Early Bilateral Relations between Japan and Hungary (1869-1913) @University of Vienna, Japanese Studies Department, u:japan lecture series (online lecture)

2021 June: 第5回Coffee Time Series / 二か国関係史の学際的研究のケーススタディー @Historians' Workshop, Coffee Time Series (online talk)

2019 Nov.: Nissan Seminar Series: 'Under Double Monarchy: Early Hungarian-Japanese Relations in the global setting' @Nissan Institute, University of Oxford (in-person lecture)

2019 May: 'Operetta Figures and Lovely Knick-knacks' - (in-person lecture as part of the Exhibition 'Touch of Japan'@ Ybl Budai Kreatív Ház)

2019 May: 'Touch Of Japan' - Co-curated exhibition @Ybl Kreatív Ház, Budapest

2019 Jan.: Edutainment event (history + sushi workshop) @Sushi Sei Restaurant, Budapest, (in-person edutainment event)

2019 Jan: 'Ady and Japan at the turn of the Century' @Cafe Drei Raben (in-person presentation)

2018 Nov: Historian's Beer Night "To Japponia, all Hungarians!" Japan-Hungary Relations between 1869-1913 (in-person edutainment lecture)

2018 Mar-Oct: 'Japan Salon: Our superstitions on the table'; Event series 'Salon Japonaise' (history+gastronomy) @NEGURA (in-person edutainment event)

2018: Several lectures, book launch events: Institute of Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT, Budapest), Petőfi Literary Museum Budapest, KeletCult Coffee Budapest, etc… (in-person lectures, talks)

2017 March: Lecture on the history of bilateral relations between Japan and Hungary @ Inter-Parlamentary Union, Hungary-Japan Friendship Division, Parliament of Hungary (in-person lecture)

2017 Feb: 'Gracious Japanland' - Old-fashioned standup on the microhistory of Hungaro-Japanese relations at the turn of the Century, accompanied by live gramophone music @Budapest (in-person edutainment event)

2014 May: 'Japan Salon: Running Bacon ' - story slices and pieces of anecdotes on the relations between Japan and Hungary at the turn of the Century @Budapest (in-person edutainment event)

2013 March: "Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Japan (1869-1913)" @ IV. Near and Far Orientalist Conference @Budapest (in-person presentation)

Links to all podcasts, book reviews, interviews, articles, videos, etc…:

Erzsébet-híd díszkivilágítása 2009. 11. 17.; エリザベート橋のライトアップ
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OO6QuOxft3I

Történelemszemlélő / A felkelő nap országa Magyarországról nézve
https://konyv.guru/tortenelemszemlelo-a-felkelo-nap-orszaga-magyarorszagrol/

Időutazás a bájos Japánországba gramofon lemezekkel
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=exfBuX0iK2M

Operettfigurák és bájos nippek cikksorozat 1-5., ujkor.hu:
https://ujkor.hu/content/operettfigurak-es-bajos-nippek-japan-divat-kezdetei-5-resz

A magyar urak japán lányokat hajkurásztak
https://24.hu/tudomany/2018/06/24/magyar-japan-monarchia/

Tények a közelség illúziója nélkül
https://magyaridok.hu/kultura/tenyek-a-kozelseg-illuzioja-nelkul-3339656/

Tündérország még mindig elég távoli és ismeretlen (Japán-Magyar Kapcsolattörténet, 1869-1913)
http://ujnautilus.info/tunderorszag-meg-mindig-eleg-tavoli

Magyarok Japánban, japánok Magyarországon – Monográfia a századfordulós japán-magyar kapcsolattörténetről
https://ujkor.hu/content/magyarok-japanban-japanok-magyarorszagon-monografia-szazadfordulos-japan-magyar-kapcsolattortenetrol

Keleti nyitás 150 éve, avagy a monarchia japán kapcsolatai
https://index.hu/techtud/tortenelem/2018/08/17/keleti_nyitas_regen_avagy_a_monarchia_japan_kapcsolatai/

Riport a Japán-magyar kapcsolattörténet c. könyv bemutatóján (PIM, 2018,09,13)
https://soundcloud.com/l-l-609469929/riport-a-japan-magyar-kapcsolattortenet-c-konyv-bemutatojan-pim-20180913

A Japán-magyar kapcsolattörténet c. könyv bemutatója (teljes felvétel, PIM 2018-09-13)
https://soundcloud.com/l-l-609469929/20180913_teljes

Terítéken a japán-magyar kapcsolattörténet
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a05aaD02jEE

Rádió Bézs (Civil Rádió) interjú, Keménykötés Hajós Veronikával
https://www.radiobezs.hu/radiobezs_files/Arch%C3%ADvum/2024/0712_0800.mp3

Későn jövők klubja
https://www.es.hu/cikk/2018-11-16/szeifert-natalia/keson-jovok-klubja.html

Különleges este a történelem és gasztronómia jegyében
https://sushisei.hu/kulonleges-este-a-tortenelem-es-gasztronomia-jegyeben/?fbclid=IwAR2fS3gm3Mv09IjYnPJToLqa-iFN33SEyMFTrxCwDqf80fa0YmOWIsDZd9o

Ady Endre és az MTA is kevés ide: máig akadnak hívői a japán-magyar rokonságnak
https://qubit.hu/2019/04/21/ady-endre-es-az-mta-is-keves-ide-maig-akadnak-hivoi-a-japan-magyar-rokonsagnak

A daliás idők, amikor a magyarok Bösendorfer zongorát és Dreher sört vittek a japán császárnak
https://qubit.hu/2019/04/11/a-dalias-idok-amikor-a-magyarok-bosendorfer-zongorat-es-dreher-sort-vittek-a-japan-csaszarnak

Orient Expressz #27: Mit szólt Meidzsi császár a Bösendorfer zongorához? – Tóth Gergely 2019. március 08. - Orient Expressz
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk036VkFfIQ&t=1586s

Erdélyi hajóorvosok útirajzai Japánországról. Tóth Gergely: Japán–magyar kapcsolattörténet 1869–1913
https://epa.oszk.hu/00400/00458/00650/pdf/EPA00458_korunk-2019-01_121-123.pdf

Nissan Seminar: Under Double Monarchy: Early Hungarian-Japanese Relations in the global setting
https://web.archive.org/web/20250419142053/https://www.nissan.ox.ac.uk/event/nissan-seminar-under-double-monarchy-early-hungarian-japanese-relations-in-the-global-setting

Amikor gésának öltöztek a bálokon a lányok
https://real.mtak.hu/103442/1/VT_2019-3_Ko%C3%B3sz%20Istv%C3%A1n.pdf

Tóth, Gergely M. Japán-Magyar kapcsolattörténet 1869–1913. Budapest: Gondolat Kiadó, 2018. Pp. 352
https://sci-hub.sidesgame.com/10.1017/S0067237820000399#google_vignette

Interjú, Kossuth ÁRdió, Gondolat-jel 2021/08/22;Ki volt az a magyar, aki először járt Japánban? Tóth Gergely japanológus
https://web.archive.org/web/20230420134211/https://mediaklikk.hu/kossuth-radio/cikk/2021/08/19/gondolat-jel-a-remeny-peremen-covid-korhaz-cimu-regeny/

A magyarok identitáskeresése és a területi egység összefüggései egy fiatal kínai kutató szemével - Shu Sunle kutató Tóth Gergellyel való találkozásáról
https://web.archive.org/web/20250515045513/http://hungarian.cri.cn/radio-programmes/3790/20210903/699625.html

Orbán Viktor és a japán–magyar rokonság
https://hang.hu/publicisztika/orban-viktor-es-a-japan-magyar-rokonsag-136422

Hiába erőltetik a politikusok, a tudomány nem igazolja a japán-magyar nyelvi vagy genetikai rokonságot
https://qubit.hu/2022/11/13/hiaba-eroltetik-a-politikusok-a-tudomany-nem-igazolja-a-japan-magyar-nyelvi-vagy-genetikai-rokonsagot?fbclid=IwAR32OUJa_IjZmCtNhpYaJ9foAGQJ1i5kUjMNfrIjxc0X51hLtjoij7mh8PI

Diplomacy & Beyond: Gergely Toth
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVv5CQeL_zk

Ahogy mi, magyarok a japánokra gondolunk, és ahogy ők nem akarják, hogy gondoljunk rájuk
https://qubit.hu/2023/05/06/ahogy-mi-magyarok-a-japanokra-gondolunk-es-ahogy-ok-nem-akarjak-hogy-gondoljunk-rajuk

Japán–magyar kapcsolattörténet 1869–1913
https://gondolatkiado.hu/webshop/tortenelem-es-politologia/japan-magyar-kapcsolattortenet-1869-1913/

Ablak Japánra #22– Rokonság szegről is meg végről is – higgyük is meg nem is?
https://podcast.ablak-japanra.com/22-rokonsag-szegrol-is-meg-vegrol-is-higgyuk-is-meg-nem-is/

„Mióta ők csinálják a történelmet, a kis japániak, nagy a gusztusunk rokonságba lépni velük”
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Magyarok is segítettek beindítani a japán fejlődést az 1900-as évek elején
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Distant cousins, or What You Will - Deconstructing a subcultural belief in the history of Japanese-Hungarian Bilateral Relations Gergely Tóth (Independent Scholar)
https://sites.google.com/site/modernjapanhistoryworkshop/previous-talks/2020s/2022

“Something exciting is brewing”: Japanese Studies Scholar Gergely Tóth on untold stories in the MAK exhibition „THE 1873 VIENNA WORLD’S FAIR REVISITED“
https://blog.mak.at/impressions-vienna-worlds-fair-revisited/

Magyar-japán kapcsolatok - Ratio Podcast 11. rész
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJNgDl8_yk8&t=865s

Unpacking the supposed connection between Hungarians and the Japanese
https://soundcloud.com/l-l-609469929/mix-by-audio-joinercom?si=bd88faa7e3d5433b82a8a21e6816c3b4&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing

Így fedezték fel a magyarok Japánt – és a japánok is a magyarokat!
https://mandiner.hu/hirek/2019/07/japan-toth-gergely-matyas

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pe9zx4f4Bng

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Informasia 2025 #5 Gergely Tóth
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(Note: the bibliography contains some works crucial for understanding Austrian, Croatian, Czech, Polish, Slovak, and Romanian relations with Japan. Due to an interim structural redesign of the book, these works did not make it into the final version of the monograph, but are included here as useful references for future research.)

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